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# RUSSIA & THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

BY

MICHAEL S. FARBMAN

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*To Maxim Gorky*

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## PREFACE

**T**HIS book is not an apologia for Russia or the Revolution. I do not intend to plead for Russia or to beg that she should be judged with mercy or that her conduct should be forgiven. Nor do I intend to blame anyone for Russia's misfortunes or to engage in controversy with the many severe and contemptuous critics of the Russian Revolution. But at this terrible hour when enemies and friends alike are blaming Russia for their misfortunes, when old and friendly ties are being displaced by new distrust and active hatred, I feel I must do my best to dispel the fundamental misunderstandings and calumnies. My sole intention is therefore to give a truthful and objective account of the Russian Revolution and what it stands for—so far at least as objective truth is accessible to one who is filled with enthusiasm for the Revolution, and is deeply convinced that the Revolution is not only a magnificent opportunity for the free development of the true genius of Russia, but also the greatest victory of the human spirit.

I do not pretend that everything in Russia is good and that the Revolution has to answer for no sins, nor do I intend to hide its failures or to be silent about them.

The time has come to speak about Russia, it may be with regret, but certainly without bitterness or passion.

\* \* \* \* \*

It will be for the future historian of the Great Russian Revolution to trace its beginnings. Such an historian will no doubt go back many decades into the past. He will begin its story at least from the date of the liberation of the Serfs in 1861 and will record the causal chain of events from that point.

We, as contemporaries of the Revolution, have another task, and are face to face with other and more actual problems. We are too near to the scene; we see the actors too clearly and ascribe to them a far greater rôle than will history. We are active to praise and to condemn. In short, we are at this stage unable to judge the Revolution historically.

The main questions of interest, to friends and enemies of the Revolution alike, are these: *First*, how far was the Revolution the result of the War and how far was the struggle for peace which followed the Revolution inherent in it? In other words, did the peace policy of the revolutionary democracy express the true purpose of Russia at the time; or were the Soviets, with all that they stand for, really alien to the people and to the Revolution? *Secondly*, was the disintegration of Russia and the dissolution of the Russian Army inevitable, or was Russia torn to pieces and made helpless by the very acts of the leaders of the Revolution?

I do not think I am far wrong in thus reducing all the bitter controversy which has raged around the Revolution to these two single questions.

M. F.

.. *St. John's Wood, March 21, 1918.*

## Part I: Introductory

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# CHAPTER ONE

## THE REVOLUTION AND THE ALLIES

**N**EVER perhaps in history has a great Revolution been less foreseen abroad ; probably nothing in history has perplexed people more.

At first sight this is strange, because the Revolution was developing in Russia for more than two years, and no honest observer ought to have failed to see its approach. And yet people here had not the slightest idea that revolution was imminent, and when it actually occurred they were taken by surprise. And then the British public was absolutely unprepared to understand either the causes of the Revolution or its meaning.

But after all it is not unnatural that the Revolution was so great a surprise. Probably no country in the world was less known than Russia. Ideas even of Russian geography were most hazy. The ethnography of Russia was virtually a Chinese puzzle to the majority ; and a good many Englishmen are now probably for the first time making themselves acquainted with Ukrainians, Lithuanians and other races and nationalities of Russia. Russian economics have seldom been touched upon, and Russian social life was less understood than that of Mexico or Japan. There were available one or two good books on Russia, but those (notably the famous Klutchevsky's " History of Russia ") are little known and little read. Unfortunately other books, of a biassed character, written either by illiterate compilers or clever charlatans, have lately acquired a rather considerable influence in this country.

It sounds paradoxical, but it is nevertheless a grim reality, that the political *rapprochement* between Eng-

land and Russia, which might have been expected to contribute to a better understanding of Russia and of the Russian people, had, on the contrary, an exactly opposite effect. From the very beginning of the *rapprochement* in 1907 it became the fashion to depict Russia and the Russian people with sentimental flattery. The previous conception of Russia as a backward country, with rotten political institutions and a monstrous despotism, was said to be biassed and false. Russia had to be "discovered" again. And since then Russia and the soul of Russia have been successfully "discovered" many a time. The real aim of these discoveries was not so much to give a full and veracious account of real Russia, as to blind the British people to Russian realities. So long as the political interests of the two countries were regarded as opposed, the sharpest and most implacable critic of Russian political institutions and public life used to be considered rather useful and therefore welcome. But when the Governments of Britain and Russia decided upon a common policy and a political *rapprochement*, a change of public opinion about Russia was deemed necessary. And that is precisely why the greater part of these "discoveries" of Russia and of that mysterious "Russian Soul" differ very little from the old-fashioned political art of applying "whitewash."

To reconcile the free British people with the Russian autocracy was, of course, no easy undertaking. Dislike of Russian political institutions was deep-rooted. A free and proud people like the British not only had a deep repugnance to the Tsardom, but could scarcely admire or like a people which was content to live and suffer under a rotten autocracy. But the political aims of the State demanded a reconciliation; and there is never any lack of imaginative genius when the "highest interests of the State" demand it. Thus it was that the very difficult problem of reconciling British public opinion with reactionary Russia was quickly solved, and with ingenious simplicity. The solution was the



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discovery of "Holy Russia." It was declared that Russia was unlike other countries which are "hopelessly plunged in commercialism and materialism." It was declared that her mystical, religious and unpractical inhabitants, and her institutions, must not be judged from the materialistic Western point of view. Autocracy would certainly be abominable for the Western peoples, and for Western culture. In Russia it was quite different. Russia suffered under the autocracy in a material sense, but that was the mystical way of her spiritual perfection. And so on. Thus the "Holy Russia" school not only justified the autocracy but even glorified it. The legend about the Tsar as the "Little Father" of the millions of Russian peasants was cleverly disseminated. The Tsardom was no longer a nightmare and a curse. It became the mystical *focus* of Russia's spiritual life.

The theory of Holy Russia and the discovery of the mystical Russian soul, with its semi-religious relations to the Tsardom, were at first received in England rather sceptically. But politically it was too convenient a conception to give way before scepticism. It fulfilled its function of relieving the conscience of the people and making the *rapprochement* with the Tsardom plausible. As always happens with convenient theories of this sort, the legend of a Holy Russia and its Little Father was easily swallowed by an indiscriminating public opinion.

At the time of the outbreak of war there was hardly a single spiritual barrier left to an alliance with Russia. Ten years ago, before the discovery of "Holy Russia," it would not have been so easy to fight in comradeship of arms with Tsarist Russia. The United States, which had remained somewhat sceptical of this theory that Russia for the sake of her spiritual perfection needed the blessing of Tsardom, waited until the Revolution made it possible for her to join Russia and Russia's Allies.

In the course of the war the real Russia emerged. It became better known in Western Europe thanks to

Russian literature, which was then widely translated and read. Russian literature helped to show many people that the real soul of Russia had nothing in common with this fallacious, essentially contemptuous and "sugary" legend of "Holy Russia." It exposed the lie that the Russian people were content with the abject conditions of their life; that in curious contradiction with the rest of mankind they enjoyed, as it were, inwardly with a sweet suffering, oppression and misery, the squalor and poverty of their existence.

But in spite of the positive influence of Russian literature the justification of Tsardom made ever greater progress during the war. It is true that in the Grand Alliance of Western Democracies Russia was given the rather modest function of a "Steam Roller," but all that was spoken, and all that was written in newspapers and books, about Russia during the war was intended to convey the idea that we had always made a big mistake about her and that there was nothing objectionable in Russia's political institutions. With the exception of a small remnant of the Liberal and Labour Press the whole British Press exalted Russia's Government, her political institutions, and her public life. The Alliance added to the justification of Tsardom a certain amount of official politeness and indeed of flattery.

It is, therefore, not astonishing that people in this country were perplexed when the Revolution came about.

When the Russian Workers and Soldiers tore down the crumbling pillars and rotten institutions of what was being glorified in this country as Holy Russia; when the Autocracy became in a few hours a sad memory, and the "Little Father" was reduced to the proportions of a mean-spirited nonentity, the people of England, who had been taught to believe that this dark corner of Russia was the real and "Holy" Russia, were greatly bewildered. The speedy and complete liquidation of the Tsardom was astounding and painful to the followers of the Holy Russia school. They asked them-

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selves anxiously : " Where is the army of the Tsar? Why do the Soldiers not rush to rescue their beloved Chief? Why are the peasants so indifferent? Why do they suffer this humiliation? Why do they allow themselves to be robbed of the Tsardom which is the means and end of their perfection? " The Revolution was in fact a day of great anxiety and bitter disappointment to the whitewashers. Their ten years' labour of justification and glorification of Tsardom was torn to pieces. But they were not willing to give up their theory. When they had satisfied themselves that the Tsar's abdication was definite, they made a desperate attempt to save the glory at least of the Tsardom. They hastened therefore to assert, first, that the Revolution was a mere reaction against the treacherous Government which, under the influence of an immoral Empress, a German Princess, had contemplated a separate peace with the Enemy; and, secondly, that the Tsar's abdication was a " noble act " of " his own will," dictated by his devotion to his people and the " great European cause which he served so well."

To-day we know too much about the causes and the meaning of the Revolution to need seriously to consider the attempts to save the theory of Holy Russia and to represent the Tsar as a martyr to his love for " his " people and for the Allied cause. I mention it only because it was the unfortunate origin of all the discrepancies of the Allied diplomacy towards Russia after the Revolution. Only thus can the confusion and wavering of the Allies be explained. Their badly-informed spokesmen believed in the tales about the Little Father. They had been told that a rising of the peasants in the " million of Russian villages " to restore the sanctuary of Tsardom was possible, even probable; and they therefore could not bring themselves to think that the Revolution was final. As statesmen, of course, they considered that they had to be very cautious in their attitude towards a revolution. They sent greetings to the Russian people, expressed their joy over the estab-

lishment of a democratic Government, but all that in an astonishingly cool spirit, with many reservations, and (monstrously enough) coupled with compliments to the Tsar. This type of greetings to the Revolution, coupled with the strange compliments to the overthrown tyrant, produced the most painful impression in Russia. There the disappointment was as bitter as it was unexpected. For instance, the "*Rabotchaia Gazetta*" (the organ of the Minimalists, the leading group at that time) published very bitter comments on Mr. Bonar Law's official speech of congratulation to Russia, with its tribute to the ex-Tsar, under the title, "Greetings to Nicholas!"\*

This initial and fundamental blunder of the Allies towards the Russian Revolution was almost entirely due to the work of those traducers who had substituted for the true, authentic, creative genius of Russia the despised offal of Russian culture, of those who had pronounced as "Holy" the bigoted and unholy corner of darkest Russia.

There was, however, another reason which made the relations between the Allies and revolutionary Russia even more difficult. I refer to the unfortunate idea of appraising the Revolution not for its own sake or its

\* The following are a few passages from this article in the "*Rabotchaia Gazetta*," which truly represented the general feeling in Russia at that time towards this unfortunate lack of tact and understanding on the part of Allied Statesmen: "Nicholas Romanov has received his first greetings. . . . While Revolutionary Russia was celebrating the victory over the tyrannical and pernicious dynasty of the Romanovs, in the English Parliament, Russia's Ally, Mr. Bonar Law said, 'I hope I may be allowed to express my sympathy to the late Tsar, who I believe was our true Ally for three years. . . .' Whose Ally, then, is the English Minister, Mr. Bonar Law?" the paper asks indignantly. "Is he the Ally of the deposed despot or of the new free Russia? . . ." Equally unfortunate was the lack of tact of the Allied Ambassadors and the patronising tone which they adopted towards the new Russian Government. The speech of the British Ambassador during the first official reception by the Provisional Government aroused universal indignation, and was equally sharply criticised in the Liberal and in the Socialist Press.

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worth to the Russian people but solely from the "military point of view." Here in England that seemed the most natural way of thinking; but in Russia it was felt to be a monstrous lapse. To look at the overthrow of the Autocracy and the liberation of the Russian people as no more than a means for the better prosecution of the war, was indeed cruel and stupid to the point of disaster. It was bound to frighten away Russia.

The Revolution was for the Russian people the greatest blessing that could ever happen. For them the war was but a means of liberation, and, whether all Russians were conscious of it or not, the great enthusiasm shown at the beginning for the war was only to be explained by the belief, hope or foreboding that the war would somehow or other lead to a new and better world. Without the hope that it would make Russia free the war had no meaning in Russia at all. English people will never understand the spirit of the Revolution and the extent of the disappointment felt in Russia when this "utilitarian" (as it was called there) point of view became known, so long as they decline to see that the Russian people were justified in looking upon the Revolution as the highest blessing in the world and in estimating all other things—the war included—by this new criterion: whether it helped or hindered the consolidation of the gains of the Revolution.

The Revolution had been the holiest and the highest hope of several generations of Russians. The best men and women had joyfully given their lives for its accomplishment. Russia at length became free; and Russia's Allies could think of nothing but of the effect that it might have upon their own military fortunes.

There was never a more bitter and unexpected disappointment than when Russia became conscious of this Allied "selfishness." It was a blunder; a heavy and bitter blunder on the part of the Allies. But what came later was a crime.

I refer to the sympathy, encouragement, and help given to every counter-revolutionist and adventurer who



tried to overthrow the Revolution and promised to induce or to compel Russia to fight again. Only think of the British public and Press exalting and acclaiming Counter-Revolution in Russia! Anything more monstrous it was difficult to imagine.

And after all that has happened there are still people in this country who are sincerely astonished, and ask how it has come about that Russia's great affection towards this country has after the Revolution so suddenly been replaced by suspicion and mistrust? And the very newspapers which are chiefly responsible for the deplorable change rush in with an easy explanation of "German intrigue."

Not for the first or last time in the course of the war they have used "German intrigue" as a cover for their own ignorance or blunders. But in this instance the interdependence between the vilification of the Revolution in British and French newspapers and on the platform and the change in Russia's attitude towards the Allies is too clear. The part of "German intrigue" in destroying Anglo-Russian friendship we do not know. It may be great or small. But with the sinister rôle of a section of the British Press and politicians we are unfortunately only too well acquainted.

But whatever was the origin of the "intrigue" which led to the attempt to pervert the causes and the meaning of the Revolution, to-day there can be not the least doubt that :

(1) The Revolution was not caused by the treachery of the Court, the immorality of the Empress or the foul influence of Rasputin. On the contrary, the treachery of the Court was a desperate attempt to save the Tsardom from the coming Revolution.

(2) The Revolution was neither bellicose nor pacifist. It came not for the sake of a better prosecution of the war nor to end the war. The only aim of the Revolution was to save Russia from ruin and destruction. But, in view of Russia's exhaustion and the process of disintegration, the Revolution had only one way out—*i.e.*,

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a speedy conclusion of the war. And the revolutionary democracy was able in about a fortnight's time after the Revolution to formulate the purpose of the Revolution with a clearness and prophetic foresight such as is only possible in moments of spiritual exaltation.

The Revolution was pacifist, not in principle, but as a matter of necessity. If the Revolution had taken place a year or two before, the same revolutionary democracy of Russia would certainly have conducted a revolutionary war.

As matters stood, the Counter-Revolution dressed itself in a bellicose cloak, not because it was devoted to the Allied cause, or disliked Germany, or was patriotic; but simply because the hated revolutionary democracy was pacifist. If the Revolution had insisted on continuing the war the Counter-Revolution would for the same reason have assumed a pacifist mask.

*If the Revolution does not succeed in killing the war, the war will destroy the Revolution*—that was felt and believed by everyone in Russia. It was the universal creed. The counter-revolutionists knew and believed this quite as well as the revolutionists. And there is not the slightest doubt that they shouted so loudly for the war and “our noble Allied cause, which Russia must not desert,” simply and solely because they knew that the longer the war dragged on and the longer the process of Russia's economic disintegration continued the easier it would be for them to destroy the Revolution.

*The struggle for peace, in short, was the struggle for the consolidation of the Revolution, and the shouts that were raised for going on with the war were but a means for undermining and destroying the Revolution.*

No doubt the many sins of the dastardly Government and of the putrescent Court stimulated the Revolution. But even if Rasputin had never existed and the Empress had been as virtuous as, say, the wife of the Procurator of the Holy Synod; if the Tsar had been more patriotic than the Editor of the *Novoie Vremia*, or Protopopov, his crazy Minister, had been quite sound and a supporter

of the "knock-out-blow" policy—nevertheless the Revolution would have been inevitable. It might have come under less startling circumstances and probably a little later, but it would have come all the same.

The more we know about the Revolution and the forces that brought it about, the more we become convinced that the Revolution was not a dramatic and sudden act. The Revolution was not the beginning of a new development, but rather the end of a process begun long ago.

If by revolution we conceive a sudden and a dramatic cataclysm, then I am sure there was in Russia no revolution at all. Revolution, as I conceive it, is the long process of dying away and decomposition of an old social and political order and the upgrowing of a new social structure. The moment the new order presents its claims and takes possession of the political institutions of the State—that is *the Revolution*. Certainly the earlier the new order asserts itself and the more vitality the old order still retains, the more violent and the more dramatic is the revolution.

The Russian Revolution was bloodless and not at all violent, because the new order had put in its claims at a very late stage in the development of its own strength and in the corresponding decomposition of the old. At the moment of the Revolution the Russian Monarchy was virtually a corpse, without a trace of vigour or vitality. Its mortal sickness was upon it before the war. The war enormously hastened the end.\*

The tragedy of Russia is that the war not only definitely destroyed the Monarchy, but undermined the economic foundations of the State. The new order was crippled by the war even before it was enthroned.

\* We live, without any doubt, in a revolutionary epoch, and the Russian Revolution is only the forerunner of the great changes which await the world. The "order," which now possesses the power of the State, is evidently growing "old," and a new structure is looming. But whether there will be "Revolution" or whether the change will be accomplished without revolution depends entirely on two conditions: (1) When the new order will



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present its claims (the longer it is detained the less chance of a violent revolution), and (2) whether the old order is ready to make concessions, so as to let the new order come in gradually.

There are logically only two ways : either evolution or revolution. Arrest evolution, and revolution is inevitable. Unfortunately the majority of the propertied and power-possessing classes conceive " evolution " merely as a sanction of their " eternal and holy rights." At any rate, " evolution " is not disposed to keep up with the growth of the new order by satisfying its claims. " Holy Russia " was not unique. Many things are Holy in this sense. There are too many such sanctities. Land ownership is certainly " Holy." The wage system is " Holy." But there comes the fatal contradiction : a social order develops ; " Holy " things never do. They are worshipped until they are mercilessly smashed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SHIRKING THE TRUTH

**L**OOKED at after the event and in retrospect, many things are seen more clearly and distinctly than at the time. To-day it is puzzling to understand how the Allies could have made such a fatal miscalculation of Russia's strength.

All that Russia really possessed was practically unlimited man-power; on that account she might hope to play an enormous and perhaps a decisive part in a short war of manœuvres, but in this war of trenches and siege operations Russia was in fact the weakest partner and was bound to be the first to collapse.

This is a war of attrition, and it should have needed little special foresight to perceive that poor and uneducated Russia, financially unstable and economically dependent upon the enemy, was doomed. Russia was bound to fall exhausted long before other belligerents had begun to feel the pinch.

This is a contest of engineers. Was it not foolish, absurd, and even criminal, to expect that Russia, with her mere rudiments of industry, and dependent, as she was, with her weak and undeveloped technical equipment, upon the enemy, would be able to go on for years in this gigantic struggle on such unequal terms?

Finally, this is a war of endurance, a trial of strong and healthy nerves; a contest of character and of national tenacity; therefore it should have been manifest beforehand that Russia, possessing no strong national traditions, permeated with mutual distrust, with class and national hatred, would be the first to go under.

At the beginning of the war, however, this miscalculation on the part of the Allies was not at all so astonishing. They, in fact, did not know either the real strength of Russia or the specific character of the war.

But why did not the Allies revise their views after both the weakness of Russia and the character of the war had revealed themselves with more than sufficient clearness? This question is an imperative one. It must be answered. But there is only one answer: The Allies were blind because they would not see; *they were afraid to face the truth.*

The more I go over, in my mind, the history of the fateful last three years, the more convinced I am that the bitterest enemy of the Entente during this time was this peculiar fear of the truth. "Secret diplomacy" is the popular name of the malady which led to this terrible war and dominates its issues. But secret diplomacy is after all only a mean manifestation of a more general shrinking from light and truth. I do not mean deliberate untruths, falsehoods, fictions which, time and again, have beclouded the issues of the war. I do not even mean the all-too-familiar game of hiding the truth. I refer simply and solely to a peculiar instinct for shirking the truth one's self—an instinct which has developed to a very high degree since the outbreak of war.

The reasons why this remarkable dislike of truth has developed to such an extent are pretty obvious, and, I readily admit, to a certain extent are comprehensible. So deeply rooted has the belief in the strength and superiority of the Entente been, that even the most severe checks were taken lightly as not being able seriously to affect the prospects of final and complete victory. Why, then, disturb the confidence of the people—a very great and positive asset in war—by directing attention to the many and natural little defects, mistakes, or even misfortunes?

And so the Entente politicians and Press acquired the habit of ignoring all that was unfavourable or likely to slacken their Olympian tranquillity. On occasion a strong and unexpected blow surprised and shocked the unprepared public mind, but the Press easily explained away any unpleasant truth and restored confidence; and soon mental equilibrium reigned again. But the most

remarkable thing was that the people themselves became so accustomed to living in an atmosphere of over-confidence that even the rare warnings from the Press that any particular situation was difficult, or even grave, were generally received with cool scepticism by the public. Over-confidence became the second nature of the Entente peoples. To be confident was the highest degree of patriotism. Any criticism of Allied politics, strategy or diplomacy, was declared unpatriotic. To describe the position of the Allies as splendid and the situation of the enemy as desperate was the only business left to patriotic people. The most striking example of this was the attitude of the Allies towards Russia prior to the Revolution.

The situation of Russia was as bad as it could be, but not a word of criticism or warning was uttered in the Entente Press. In fact the organs of the Allied Press, great and small, the big voices of the leading newspapers and the squeaking accompaniment of the lesser chorus, created together an unbroken harmony of continuous praise and compliments to "our great Russian ally and its august Chief." Yet, at that time, the Russian situation was appalling. Russia was literally on the brink of an abyss. Rapid changes of Ministers, and even of Commanders-in-Chief, indicated to the whole world that the situation was exceedingly unstable. The economic situation of the country was critical and grew worse every month that the war went on. The Russian people were in open feud with the Government; and even a Secretary of State for War came down to the Duma, in open defiance of the Government, shook hands with the leader of the Opposition, and intimated that the army was sick of the incompetence of the Government, and was ready to support any popular change. The situation was indeed grave and menacing. But the Allies took no notice and preferred to live in a fool's paradise. Instead of trying to find out how matters stood and to act accordingly, the Allies

had recourse to the method of ignoring trouble rather than removing it. They simply forbade the Press to discuss or criticise the Russian situation. The Press apparently accepted this course as being the wisest in the circumstances. At any rate it was by this time their habitual method. And the incessant chorus of the Allied Press could continue undisturbed to approve and praise all that was going on in Russia. The only concern of the Government and the Press was not to disturb the public or shake its confidence. And the people were misled and encouraged to believe that Russia was all right, and her spirit splendid. While Russia was being exhausted economically and disintegrating as a military power, the Allied peoples were awaiting with the utmost confidence great military successes in the East.

Then came rumours of separate peace negotiations between the Tsar's Government and the Germans; nay more, not rumours but grim and definite facts, which were openly spoken of in the Russian Parliament.

Again the truth was avoided and perverted. Miliukov's speech in the Duma, accusing the Tsar's Government of treason—an historic event—was simply and ignobly concealed from the British public. There was but a slight confusion felt in the Allied Press for a day or two, and then the line was straightened once more and the harmonious chorus of newspaper praise broke out again, inspiring confidence by its pleasant music.

But at this time even the long-suffering and confiding British public became somehow affected and plainly uneasy. Very likely the British Government itself was somewhat disquieted. At any rate a great Commission, headed by Lord Milner, was sent to Petrograd to investigate the situation on the spot. And then a most remarkable thing happened. Lord Milner's Commission, well able to understand and judge such a situation at any other time, proved utterly incompetent to discover anything abnormal or anxious in the situation of Russia.



When Lord Milner was in Russia the situation was, briefly, this : The army was rapidly disintegrating, and there were many obvious indications of it. Discipline and obedience had in many instances to be upheld by sheer force, and *two million deserters* from the army were roaming about Russia. It is impossible to believe that the Allied Military Missions in Petrograd and at the Russian front were ignorant of these facts. Yet Lord Milner's Commission was obviously ignorant of them, for the deplorable situation of the Russian army and the mass desertions of Russian soldiers did not shake its confidence in the might of the Tsardom.

But not alone the army—the whole of Russia was in a terrible state. Petrograd was actually starving, but Lord Milner's Commission was unable to perceive even that patent fact. Let it be supposed that the Russian Government tried its very best to mislead the British Commission and to conceal the real situation. Even then it could only be put down to some miracle of blindness that the Commission was unaware of starvation in Petrograd. The Commissioners could not fail to observe the endless queues all day long before the bread shops all over the capital. Queues must then have been a new and disquieting thing to the British Commissioners, and yet even the sight of women standing for hours in the snow and bitter frost before bread shops had practically no effect upon the Commission's report about Russia's situation. But perhaps the food question was no concern of the British Government Commission. How, then, was it possible that Lord Milner paid so little attention to the grave *political* situation of Russia? We must assume that the British Ambassador at Petrograd informed Lord Milner about the seriousness of the political situation.

At present, of course, the former British Ambassador sees the situation of Russia before the Revolution in a very different light. But at that time he considered the situation grave enough.

And yet Lord Milner brought back to England the most satisfactory and reassuring report. And that was less than a fortnight before the Revolution broke out.

I do not accuse Lord Milner either of incompetence or of any deliberate attempt to conceal the truth. Lord Milner's case is only one of an endless number of instances of this dangerous habit of lulling the people into pleasant illusions rather than letting them know anything disagreeable.

Now this policy of shirking the truth was bound to lead to disaster, and all of us, Russians and Allies alike, have paid a terrible price for it. The Allies let Russia fall to pieces rather than accept the plain truth that she was exhausted. And, having let Russia down, the Allies are now paying the terrible price themselves.

But, even to-day, the Allies are blaming, not their Press for perverting the truth about Russia ever since the war broke out; not their Governments and Lord Milner for ignoring the truth; not their Ambassadors and Military and Civil Missions for hiding the truth; not their Parliaments, which evidently preferred to live in a world of pleasant illusions and never insisted on being told the plain truth. No! All the more violently do they blame the Russian revolutionary democracy, which continually insisted on the truth that Russia was on the verge of ruin, and implored the Allies to take urgent measures to save Russia and themselves before it was too late.

Even when all was lost—when Russia as a State was destroyed; when all the economic, national and social foundations of Russia were undermined and the dissolution of the army was an accomplished fact; when at that time Kerensky, in an attack of utter despondency, did at last exclaim, "Russia is worn out!"—the Allied Press and public would not accept it. Instead of coming to reason even at that eleventh hour, the Allies preferred to continue in their world of illusions. Russia was again proclaimed "a mystery" which "always fights best

when you least expect that she will fight at all.”\* Allied Ministers assured the public that Russia would fight again, and those who said that Russia was worn out and could not fight any longer were denounced as “traitors.”

Had the Allies at that time only been less zealous in looking for treason and more ready to learn the truth, they might have seen that Russia's situation was critical and that a breakdown was inevitable. They might at least have been able to rearrange their military plans and review their war aims, bringing them into accordance with the real and not the imaginary strength of the Allied forces.

\* It was in the spirit of frivolous ideas like this that revolutionary Russia was driven into the July offensive which led to the final disaster.

How frivolously Allied observers used to report upon the terrible privations of the Russian people during the war may be illustrated by the following quotation from Mr. Stephen Graham's book on Russia published two months before the Revolution. “Russia in 1916” is surely the chief classic in all this literature of deception regarding Russia and the attitude of the Russian people towards the war. For instance, after describing the shortage of food and fuel, and giving some striking instances of the privations of the people, Mr. Graham contrives to give the impression that the Russian people were only too glad to endure all these sufferings for the sake of the army. He relates the following conversation between two Russians :

“The army has meat, tea, sugar, white bread?” asks one.

“Yes, the army has all these in plenty.” “Slava Tebye Gospody ! (Glory be to God),” is the rejoinder. “That's all right !” (page 43).



## Part II : The Disorganisation of Industry



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE ECONOMIC ISOLATION OF RUSSIA

I WELL remember how at the beginning of the war people in Russia used to discuss the chances of Germany's economic exhaustion under the pressure of the blockade, and I wonder now that no one realised that the economic isolation of Germany was, in fact, a double-edged weapon. Nobody seemed to grasp that the same process which was injuring Germany was bound to injure Russia still more.

It is astonishing that neither the Russian Government nor the Russian economists foresaw any danger in the economic isolation of Russia. At any rate, I can state definitely that the Russian Press, which used to prophesy the inevitable and rapid economic ruin of Germany under the pressure of the blockade and the war, had not a single article on the danger of the isolation of Russia from the West. Neither before, nor at the beginning of the war, did the Russian Government take a single measure to ameliorate the dangerous position in which Russia actually found herself after the war broke out.

And yet nothing could be more clear than that the closing of Russia's frontiers with the Central Empires, the chief countries for Russian exports and imports, was bound to have the worst effects on the economy of Russia.

The predominance of Germany in Russia's foreign trade is a matter of common knowledge. Particularly since the war, much has been written about the extent of Germany's trade with Russia in peace time. And when the war broke out there was a considerable amount of rejoicing in this country at the prospect of

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Germany losing this very considerable portion of her foreign trade. But here too, unfortunately, nobody seemed to realise that the cessation of Russo-German trade would hit Russia's economic position infinitely harder than it would stimulate the commerce of this country with Russia.

In effect, the closing of the frontier with Germany and Austria was literally a death-blow to Russia's foreign trade. As regards her exports, this will easily be realised from a glance at the following figures :—

In 1913 Russia's exports across her European land frontiers amounted to 1,232 million roubles, whereas the sum total of her exports through all her other frontiers (*i.e.*, Black Sea, Baltic ports, Caucasus, and Asiatic frontiers) was less than 300 million roubles. But the effect of the blockade on Russia's imports was even more disastrous. In 1913, the imports through Germany, Austria, and the Baltic ports, amounted to 1,146 million roubles, and through all other frontiers only to 227 million roubles. Thus the closing of the European frontiers put a stop to three-quarters of Russia's exports and to four-fifths of her imports.

But these figures by themselves do not enable us to realise the full significance of the cessation of exports and imports. In order to understand what it really meant to Russia's economic life, it is necessary to consider the nature of these exports and imports. It was, indeed, not the quantity of Germany's exports to Russia which mattered, so much as their nature and quality. Before the war Germany practically controlled Russia not only through the so-called "key-industries"; she actually dominated the whole of Russia's industrial life. Russia was dependent upon Germany—in the first place, for by far the greater part of her machinery; and secondly, because of the special character of Russian industry which consists in turning out the finished products from half-prepared materials. These half-manufactured materials ("polu-

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*fabrikaty*," as they were called) came almost entirely from Germany. Russia had raw materials enough, but her actual economic development was at such a stage that in many important branches of industry she was unable to deal with the first processes of manufacture. She therefore had to export the raw material, and re-import the ready-prepared material for the final processes of manufacture, which, again, constituted an important branch of her national industry. An example of this is seen in the leather and fur industry. Russia had raw animal hide and skins in plenty, and the making of leather goods and especially of furs was an important part of Russian industry. But the initial processes of tanning and colouring were not performed in Russia. And, as a matter of fact, Russia used to export raw hide and skins to Germany and to import back leather and furs. The famous Russian leather ware and Russian furs were made out of these German half-prepared materials. So it was in many other branches of industry. In 1913 the import of such half-manufactured products amounted to 662 million roubles, or more than half of the total imports of Russia. Altogether, Russia depended on other countries—especially on Germany—for some essential machinery or important part or process, or for the half-prepared materials, in nearly all her important industries.

It is therefore not to be wondered at, if the sudden and complete cutting off of all imports from Germany not only put an end to certain industries but paralysed nearly all the rest. Relatively speaking, Russia suffered far more from the cessation of imports in half-prepared materials than Germany suffered from the loss of Russia's raw materials. The raw materials which she used to obtain from Russia Germany endeavoured to obtain from neutral countries or to replace by some efficient substitutes. But half-prepared products are a kind of raw material whose absence is not so easy to adjust. The turning out of finished articles from these half-prepared materials had been the result of a

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long process of accommodation between the Russian and German industries.

Thus, the closing of Russia's frontiers with Germany and (to a considerably less extent) with Austria, led to the cessation of Russia's foreign trade and to the paralysing of Russia's industry.

The situation was in fact tragic, and, had Russia had a more intelligent and less corrupt Government, it would have aroused the utmost attention and measures would have been taken to deal with it. During the first months of the war it is probable that Russian industry could have been reorganised and readjusted to deal with the situation with some measure of success. Missing links in the chain of industrial production could probably have been replaced in Russia itself, and the import of machinery, and especially of agricultural machinery, could have been arranged with Great Britain, America, and Japan.

But the essential condition for the success of any big scheme of reorganisation of industry was the placing of the whole industry under control of public institutions. However, the Russian Government was too stupid to grasp the gravity of the situation. It was too closely allied with the propertied classes to dare to interfere with their private interests, and too much afraid of any show of public spirit to allow the people to play any part in Russian industrial and political life. Control of industry was the only possible remedy. But it was not applied, and no attempt whatever was made to deal with the situation from a statesmanlike point of view.

In Germany there was developed down to the very smallest details a comprehensive plan, both defensive and offensive, to obviate the difficulties caused by the war and the blockade. In Russia the almost complete cessation of foreign trade and paralysis of industry—which would have been a disaster to any country and in the case of poor and undeveloped Russia was a catastrophe—aroused very little attention.

While the Press and the public were prophesying the



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speedy exhaustion of Germany and were scoffing over Germany's measures to combat the blockade by adapting her economic and social structure to the new situation (which measures were welcomed as indications of her early breakdown), the results of the war and the blockade were striking at the very roots of the weak and undeveloped economic structure of Russia.

The Government was blind and indifferent; the Duma, after the demonstration of approval of the war, was prorogued and could not assert itself until the great defeat of the Russian armies in Galicia. And the manufacturers and merchants who were most concerned were, as usual, only looking to their profits, which, indeed, they were soon to have in unprecedented quantities. Even the menace of a speedy breakdown of industry was easily exploited by the industrialists, whose profits went up as goods in the markets went down. They started speculating and buying up in competition all the remaining stocks of goods, thus inflating prices still more and still further enhancing the difficulties for the national economy.

The struggle against the effects of this terrible economic isolation of Russia was left to the individual interests of speculators and profiteers.

It is a remarkable fact that Russia actually began to feel the pinch caused by the closing of the frontiers to German trade within a fortnight of the beginning of the war. Crowds of speculators flocked to Scandinavia and Roumania to buy substitutes for goods formerly imported from Germany; and it is noteworthy that the corrupt and stupid Government, in its attempt to "regulate" the activities of these men, could only work against the public interest.

The greater part of these new supplies were naturally of German origin or manufacture, and were, therefore, declared contraband, and the Government began to throw difficulties in the way of this traffic. The Government was so stupid and shortsighted as not to realise that the chief if not the only object of the blockade of



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Germany was to prevent supplies from reaching Germany; whereas the import of German goods into Russia, so far as it could be kept up, was of distinct advantage to Russia. However, the sinister influence of certain large interests was at work in Russia, as elsewhere, and the blockade of Germany, which had the very important but limited object of striking at the military strength of Germany, was perverted into the destruction of German commerce. "Bomb German business" was soon the cry of Russia's patriotic newspapers, and the capitalists and the Government began zealously to combat the influx of German goods, notwithstanding the fact that their entry was entirely in the public interest. Merchants and speculators were allowed to demand any price they liked for the imported goods, but they had to prove that their wares were not of German origin. The only effect of insisting on such proofs was to raise prices still higher and to make the import of necessary articles still more difficult.

Soon a new evil was added to this "wise" policy of hindering foreign goods from reaching Russia: this was a secret traffic in goods waggon. When a merchant brought goods to any Russian frontier—to Archangel, the Finnish ports, Vladivostok, or the Russo-Romanian frontier—he had to apply for a so-called "Nariad" or order for trucks. The issue of the "Nariad" depended not only on the Ministry of Communications but also on the Home Office, War Office, Admiralty, or Ministry of Commerce. The number of departments concerned depended on the circumstances of the case and on the nature of the goods. Very often the necessary orders could only be issued by the joint action of two or three Ministries. This practice made for great delays and was a great burden to the consumer, since the bribes for getting a "Nariad" inevitably increased the prices. When a merchant had succeeded in importing American, Japanese, or English goods, he was never certain of being able to obtain the necessary trucks required to take them to their destina-

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tion. Many transactions of great national importance could not be executed, thus causing great losses both to the importer and to the public.

"Trucks" was the cry of Russia, but they were more and more difficult to procure without substantial bribes to high and low officials. All Russia knew that this corrupt traffic was going on, and protested against it loudly; many cases involving high Government officials were brought before the Courts; yet the selling of "Nariads" for goods trucks could not be stopped until the Revolution.

By that time the dearth of essential articles was so great, and their price in consequence so high, that fortunes could be made by one or two trips to Stockholm or Bucharest with a couple of trunks.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE EXHAUSTION OF RUSSIA

**M**UCH has been written since the Revolution about the economic exhaustion of Russia. But, from all that one reads or hears in this country, it is obvious that the character and extent of this exhaustion is realised very imperfectly. It is generally supposed that Russia's sufferings were analogous to the strain which can be observed in all the countries at war, though Russia may have been hit a little more severely. But the real destruction of Russia's industry and economic system is ascribed to the rise of the class war, or to the excessive demands of the workers which developed after the Revolution and made the strain intolerable.

This assumption is wrong. The fact is that Russia's industry was well-nigh destroyed before the Revolution; and the character and causes of her economic exhaustion during the war had very little in common with the economic sufferings of other belligerent countries. The other belligerent countries have suffered only from a gradual diminution of their resources in raw materials and foodstuffs, while the technical basis of their economic organisation remains unshaken. Nay more, one of the most striking phenomena of the war is seen in the enormous increase in the productivity of the countries at war. For example, the growth of machinery and plant in this country during the past three years has been absolutely unequalled. Never before was such a rapid increase recorded. In Russia, although as a matter of fact the productivity did greatly increase in the early years of the war, there was no corresponding increase of machinery and plant. Hence the increase in productivity could not but have the effect of wearing out her industries and leading towards a

breakdown. Even in Germany, which suffered under the blockade and was injured by the war more than any other country, the economic life of the country was not undermined as it was in Russia. Germany's economic organism was only crippled; it was not destroyed. It remains intact in spite of all the blows which Germany has received during the war. Only her functions have been temporarily arrested and slowed down. This is evident, if only from the fear of future German competition which is so widespread in this country. In the same way, the other belligerent countries have suffered—to a less extent than Germany—through a temporary dislocation of their normal functions, through a tightening of economic strain and the need for rigid abstinence or economy in certain raw materials, foodstuffs, and other commodities. But as a well-organised machine the collective economy in these countries works, if anything, more smoothly than before the war. It is better co-ordinated.

The economic sufferings of Russia are of a totally different character. *Russia's exhaustion is organic.* The ruin of Russian industry was a long process, and an inevitable result of the war and of the economic isolation of Russia in the war. It began immediately war broke out, and was more or less complete before the Revolution—*i.e.*, before the class war and the demands of the workers could become an essential factor in hastening the final breakdown. The Revolution was the result of the economic exhaustion of Russia; not by any means its cause.

Besides the factor of economic isolation, three other factors effected the economic destruction of Russia. They were: (1) The enemy invasion and occupation of the best organised industrial districts of Russia; (2) the factor of depreciation or attrition—the wearing out of material in railways, factories, and workshops owing to the speeding-up and strain of war; and (3) the unsound and wasteful exploitation of raw materials, machinery, and labour by the State and the manufac-

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turers during the so-called mobilisation of industry for war purposes.

The first factor—the enemy invasion and devastation of the chief industrial districts—made Russia's plight not unlike that of France. But whereas the misfortunes of France were largely relieved by the Allies and America, Russia, cut off as she was from the whole world, was unable to replace her industries which were destroyed in those campaigns. At a very early stage in the war a heavy blow was inflicted on the national economy of Russia by the devastation of Poland and its severance from the Empire. There is no doubt that Poland was one of the most important industrial districts of Russia, being rich in raw materials and, which is especially important, in coal. The "Dombrova" coal region in Poland was certainly less rich in coal than the Donetz Basin, but its nearness to the Riga and Petrograd industrial areas greatly increased its economic importance. Again, the Riga district, famous for its machine and iron industry, was evacuated in 1915 during the first German attempt to force the Gulf of Riga. Officially it was called evacuation. But, in fact, it was merely a panic-stricken and unsystematic process of destruction, in which some of the largest and best equipped factories in the country, such as the "Vulcan" and "Russo-Baltic" works, were cruelly and senselessly demolished. It certainly must not be imagined that the devastation by war of Russia's industry was anything similar to that which took place in Belgium and Northern France. It was not a case of factories and buildings being levelled to the ground as on the Somme; but the economic effect of the campaigns in Poland and Western Russia was none the less disastrous. Three times the country was crossed and re-crossed by the contending armies, and by the end of that time the industrial areas in question were virtually non-existent so far as the national economy of Russia was concerned.

But the actual devastation of Russia's industries



through the enemy invasion of Western Russia was not even the main factor in bringing about the economic exhaustion of the country. The two other factors mentioned above were even more disastrous. Most important was the second factor: the factor of gradual attrition and wear and tear. Attrition as an economic term is well known, but the world never had such a striking example of it as in the effect of two years of war on Russia's economic life. The isolation of Russia, which practically prevented worn-out machinery from being replaced; the enormously increased demands of the war on factories and railways; and the early breakdown of repair shops—all these contributed to increase depreciation to an almost destructive magnitude.

The railways and means of transport suffered most. The engines, the rolling-stock, and the very rails were being worn out literally before the eyes of the people. There were no rails in stock wherewith to replace those which were worn out; there were not sufficient springs, axles or wheels with which to repair the rolling-stock. And the rate of depreciation on the railways grew yet greater, thanks to the overloading and to the feverish and unskilled handling of the traffic under the strain of war. The locomotives were continually being sent to the shops for repair in ever-increasing numbers; while the rate at which they could be repaired continually diminished. In many cases repairs could not be carried out for lack of some small essential parts like pressure gauges, which, before the war, had mostly been imported from abroad. The yards of the railway works and of the famous Briansky, Kolomensky, and other locomotive factories were packed with hundreds and thousands of broken-down engines, some of which could not be repaired at all, and the rest only very badly and after considerable delays. At a later stage not only the lack of complicated patent parts, but of simple things like springs or even screws or rivets prevented the proper and speedy execution of repairs. Even horseshoes and nails had to be imported from

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Sweden at that time; and I myself have met an enterprising man in Petrograd who made quite a fortune by importing horseshoes and nails from Sweden as personal luggage. Incidentally it may be mentioned that at the end of 1916 horseshoes became so scarce as to be only available for army horses; and the horses in the towns, despite the cobble stones and uneven roads, had to go without.

The smaller the number of serviceable locomotives and trucks, the greater the pressure on those which were left, and the greater the rate at which they fell into disrepair. It is impossible to give exact figures, but it is safe to say that just before the Revolution only a fraction of the original rolling-stock, including locomotives, was fit for use. It is worth noting that the breakdown of the railways on such an unprecedented scale, though characteristic of Russia's economic position and of the defects of the Tsarist administration, is, after all, not peculiar to Russia. A dislocation of the railways can be observed in all the belligerent countries. In France, for example, the shortage of railway materials would be felt most acutely were it not for the extensive supplies of rolling-stock, etc., from England.

This process of depreciation, the gradual wearing out of railway materials and the inability to replace worn-out parts, was thus the main cause of the breakdown of Russia's transport system. But the process was hastened by great losses of material due to the incompetence and mismanagement of the military authorities. Sometimes, for want of sidings, a great congestion on the railways leading to the front had to be relieved by the wholesale destruction of hundreds of waggons. And thousands more were dismantled and turned into winter quarters for the troops. Add to that, an enormous number of trucks and locomotives were abandoned to the enemy in the great retreat of 1915.

The process of attrition which was so marked on the railways took place in all the other industries, with this difference, that the Government made even less attempt



to help private industries than to remedy defects of transports. Thus, factories and workshops all over the country were obliged to shut down not only from lack of fuel, raw material, and means of transport, but also owing to the gradual wearing out and breakdown of machinery and the inability to execute repairs. The factories, like the railways, were being worn out before the eyes of the people, and nothing could stop the terrible process. Any accidental damage to machinery could only be repaired after much delay, and then only very badly. Thus as the war went on accidents and dislocations took place more frequently and were more serious when they occurred.

The disintegration of the Russian industries and railways, once started, could never be arrested. The ruthless exploitation of industry by the State and the manufacturers, to which reference was made above, added a special impetus of its own to this process of disintegration. But this factor only developed at a later stage, during the so-called mobilisation of industry.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE MOBILISATION OF INDUSTRY

**T**HIS period of Russia's military efforts, with all its positive effects upon the immediate supply of the fighting army and its disastrous effects on the general economy of the country, was the outcome of the great crisis which took place after the retreat from Galicia in the summer of 1915. The magnitude of this crisis surpassed even that of the great crisis of 1905, and I am deeply convinced that the Tsardom received its final blow at this time. It is true that the actual Revolution was not achieved till some eighteen months later. None the less, the real beginning of the Revolution can be traced to this terrible military catastrophe and political crisis of 1915. The events of this time are of great importance, and are worth discussing more in detail, but unfortunately the scope of the present volume does not permit me so to discuss them.

From the very beginning of the war the Russian bureaucracy made it perfectly clear that, although the help and support of the entire nation was essential for victory, the direction of the war must remain exclusively in their own hands. It was their intention and their hope that the coming victory should glorify the Monarchy, and establish beyond doubt the wisdom of the Tsar and the efficacy of his Government. Victory was considered a certainty. If the people were allowed a share in the direction of the war, the Tsardom would be robbed of this unique opportunity for increasing its prestige, whereby it was hoped to consolidate its position at least for another fifty or hundred years.

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At first the people had no quarrel with the Government as to the war, but were only anxious to do everything they could to help in its prosecution. But, as time went on and the utter incompetence of the Government became more evident, they began to demand a more democratic handling of affairs. With every month of the war they became more and more conscious that a disaster was inevitable. The old corrupt bureaucracy was incapable of managing the war and of co-ordinating and turning to good account the popular energy and enthusiasm. Public opinion demanded—not even the real democracy to which the Russian people aspired—but merely a Government which should take the people into its confidence in the prosecution of the war. But the Tsarist bureaucracy was too rigid and too envious to do this. Then, as things went from bad to worse, the people began to assert themselves. The popular forces came into conflict with the bureaucracy. This period was marked by the rise of the Zemstvos and the consolidation of the Progressive Block in the Duma. And, at a still later stage, when the bankruptcy of Tsardom was complete, the popular forces demanded that the entire direction of the war should be handed over to a representative Government which enjoyed the confidence of the people.

But the Tsar and his Government rightly judged the situation when they saw that the surrender of even a small share in the direction of the war must inevitably lead to the surrender of the whole power of the State. Thus they made the most desperate efforts to exclude the popular forces from the sanctuary of war administration and to keep the entire responsibility in their own hands.

It was not until the terrible disaster in Galicia in 1915 that it became impossible for the Bureaucracy to maintain its attitude any longer. Every soldier knew that this military collapse was due to the utter incompetence of the Government. The Tsar himself now had to invite the help of the hated popular forces. In a mani-

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manifesto permeated by fear of the popular anger and unrest, he promised an immediate convocation of the Duma and announced his intention of requesting the people's representatives to help the Government in their efforts to save the country.

In its spirit and in the circumstances of its issue this manifesto was on the whole a repetition of the famous October manifesto of 1905. But, whereas the unrest of 1905 was followed by revolutionary changes, the unrest of 1915 did not produce similar results. In effect, the crisis of 1905 took place during a great war; that of 1915 during a greater war, a war with more disastrous possibilities. The people were too much oppressed with the sense of failure and disaster and too much preoccupied by their eagerness to relieve the situation, to think of revolutionary changes. They had too much to do in taking over their new duties and responsibilities in the organisation for victory. The crisis of 1915 did not lead to revolution because the people and the army were not yet ripe for revolution. Only when they were faced with the failure of all their efforts to achieve victory—partly in co-operation with the Tsar's constantly-changing Government, partly in defiance of it—only when they saw that their last endeavours were only leading in the end to greater internal, political, and economic chaos, only then did the Revolution emerge.

The revolutionary crisis of 1915 aimed at a better organisation for victory; the Revolution of 1917 began the struggle for peace. I am convinced that the future historian of the Revolution will adopt my view that the Revolution began with the crisis of 1915, and that the time from 1915 to 1917 was its bellicose period. During this time its hopes and activities were directed towards victory in the war against Germany and Austria. Be this as it may, the fact is that the Galician disaster and the submission of the Tsardom to the popular demands inspired the people with new and great hopes that victory was possible, and led to a revival of

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that enthusiasm for the war which had been so striking in the early autumn of 1914.

The Galician disaster laid bare the terrible lack of munitions in the Russian Army, which was regarded as the primary cause of the military collapse. This led to the widespread idea that to achieve victory all Russia needed was a great and well-supplied army. The people, therefore, decided to make munitions, and a great movement was started with the watchword, "All for the Army." There had been no precedent for this movement in the earlier months of the war. It commenced its activities with truly virgin enthusiasm. But its foundations and its practical aims were totally unsound, and only served to hasten the rapid exhaustion of the country. In the feverish enthusiasm to supply the troops with ammunition and materials, the need for husbanding the country's resources in machinery, plant, and permanent means of transport was overlooked. Undoubtedly, from the point of view of immediate military advantage, mobilisation of industry was a great and striking success. During the retreat of the Russian Army from the Carpathians the soldiers in many cases had to throw stones at the advancing enemy. At that time the Russian artillery could fire, on an average, only a few rounds with one gun out of a battery of five or six. Sometimes even the infantry had nothing to fight with but sticks. But in a few months after the mobilisation of industry the whole army was well—in some cases exceedingly well—supplied with munitions. But at what price? At the price of the complete and utter exhaustion of Russia. The mobilisation of industry is a most important page in the tragic history of the economic disintegration of Russia.

Certainly, from the point of view of immediate war efficiency, this period was the most brilliant in the conduct of the war. And it was marvellous how soon the popular enthusiasm and the joint efforts of the whole country could achieve such results. But in the actual circumstances of this



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war the wholesale commandeering of the entire raw materials and of the industrial resources of the country, even down to the smallest shops, for the purpose of turning out munitions, was bound to have a most disastrous effect. It would have been sound policy—either to exploit all the manufacturing resources of the country for the making of munitions and to devote the imports from America and Great Britain primarily to the needs of the civil population—or *vice versa*. But as it was, by far the greater part of these imports were given over to war supplies, and now in addition the entire home production was mobilised for making munitions. Needless to say, this was a suicidal process, and its disastrous effects were evident only too soon.

The need and the privations of the civilian population grew worse, in proportion as the army was being better supplied with munitions.

The mobilisation of industry was a kind of illness; some sort of fever which took possession of Russian patriotic society. It was a panic movement, striving hastily to repair and to cover over the awful inward disorganisation and inefficiency which were suddenly laid bare by the Galician disaster. The very nervousness of the movement reveals the desperate mood of Russia at that time.

The rapidity with which the mobilisation of industry was achieved was the first great blow to the national economy. With impulsive haste, every little workshop cast aside its ordinary materials and processes for the manufacture of "civilian articles" and turned to the production of war materials. The enormous rate of output was the second blow, being far greater than the Russian factories could stand. "All for the War!" The State encouraged the manufacturers to exploit their plant to the greatest possible extent, and the manufacturers were only too glad of the chance. And then began a period of truly rapacious over-exploitation of plant, machinery, and labour.

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Profiteering and patriotism went hand in hand. All for the army, and the more for the army the better—that became the highest aspiration of society. The manufacturers drew their own corollary! Having succeeded in securing enormous contracts at fabulous prices, they did not let any considerations of prudence or economy interfere with them. In fact, such a chance was unique, and never to come to them again. Cheap and obedient labour was easily had; for the workers, under pressure from the public, or themselves infected by this patriotic fever, allowed themselves to be exploited as never before. Raw materials and fuel were supplied by the State or by the War Industrial Committees.

In order to understand the spirit of this period, it should be remembered that the War Industrial Committees, which took over the entire business of supplying the army with materials, were themselves representative of the biggest capitalist interests in the country. Guchkov, the leader of the Octobrist party, which was the political embodiment of capitalism in Russia, was the president of the Central Industrial Committee, whose members were themselves the leading manufacturers and financiers of the country. In every big provincial town there was a local Industrial Committee, again presided over by the local political or industrial chiefs of capitalism, and consisting of the leading manufacturers of the district. These Committees themselves gave the orders which their members had to execute. Revelations published since the Revolution confirmed the many rumours about favouritism and corruption in the distribution and execution of munition orders, even involving highly reputable members of the Industrial Committees.

But whether the motive was patriotism or gain, or both, certain it is that the manufacturers exploited this golden opportunity to the utter exhaustion of industry. The future of industry concerned nobody. All principles of sound economy and care in the use of machinery and plant were thrown over. Why should the



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manufacturers be concerned about the future? Their profits during this period promised to exceed anything that had ever been dreamt of before, or would ever come again. An intelligent and incorrupt Government would have compelled the manufacturers to enlarge their plant. Less speculative and less rapacious manufacturers would themselves have spared their old plant and made every effort to enlarge it. But the Russian Government was only too glad when the crisis, which might have ended in revolution, brought about such unexpected co-operation with the people. And the manufacturers—whether they saw the coming Revolution or not—had only one thought: of how to increase their output and bleed their resources of machinery to the utmost in that golden time of profit-making.

It was, indeed, a period of rapacious exploitation of plant, machinery, and labour. It was a “bacchanalia of profiteering.” And the exhaustion of the country under the mobilisation of industry went further in a few months than a sound economical exploitation of the country’s resources, even in war time, could have brought about in as many years. Undoubtedly, the mobilisation of industry enormously increased the supplies of the army, but under it the wants of the civil population became more and more intolerable. In a few months the Russian Army had plenty of munitions, but the nation was exhausted, its transport system paralysed, and its industry almost ruined.

Thus, while all the official and unofficial correspondents were sending joyful messages from Russia—saying how she had safely passed through her grave crisis, and how splendidly the Army was now equipped with guns and munitions—Russia was actually passing into another and much graver crisis which was to lead straight to the Revolution.

## CHAPTER SIX

# THE REVOLUTION AND THE EXHAUSTION OF INDUSTRY

**I**N the previous chapters I tried to show that the economic exhaustion of Russia and the ruin of Russian industry were long processes, and inevitable results of the war and of the isolation of Russia. The process began immediately after the war broke out. Its effects went on increasing steadily as the war continued, and were bound to grow more destructive the longer the war dragged on. This inevitable process of exhaustion was yet augmented by the maladministration of the unintelligent and corrupt Tsarist Government, and by the rapacious exploitation of industry on the part of the manufacturers.

With the Revolution a new factor came into play: the class war and the heavy demands of the workers. For a correct understanding of the Russian situation as a whole and of Russia's economics in particular, it is most necessary to gain a true idea of this class factor, and of its exact share in bringing about the destruction of Russia's economic strength. The army of publicists and correspondents who raised such an outcry against the workers after the Revolution, sat silent during all those terrible years when Russia was wearing herself out and the manufacturers were ruthlessly exploiting the industries for their own ends. Thus they produced the impression in Western Europe that the disintegration of Russia began with the Revolution. This was a very clever trick, to the double advantage of the journalists themselves and of the capitalist elements in all countries. The correspondents were silent at a time when it was their civic duty to speak and call attention to the dangerous situation through which Russia was passing. Now they began to speak, and contrived at

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the same time to justify their silence before the Revolution. Thus they convinced British public opinion that Russia's downfall was wholly brought about by the disorganisation due to the "class egoism" and excessive demands of the workers.

This was a mere trick, and no trick could alter the fact that Russia's industry was practically destroyed before the Revolution was accomplished. But, in stating this fact, I am far from intending to relieve the Revolution, the workers, and the Socialist parties from all responsibility. It is my firm conviction that nothing but blind hatred and dishonest partisanship could lead people to accuse the Revolution of destroying Russia's industry and transport system. But I *do* accuse it of not arresting the process of disintegration. The duty of the revolutionary democracy and of the Socialist parties was to stop the process of decomposition of the national economy. But they had not sufficient courage and strength of purpose to save Russia and the Russian industry from utter ruin.

The most striking feature which impressed every unbiassed observer of the Revolution was the marvellous instinct and truly prophetic foresight of the revolutionary democracy. Unfortunately the new democracy of Russia proved unable to fulfil its vision and its great programme. The reasons for this inability were very complicated. The gigantic tasks of the Revolution, which they saw so clearly, repeatedly caused them to waver in the critical moments by their very magnitude. Periods of the most marvellous creative upheaval were followed by intervals of humble scepticism and diffidence. And in these moments of spiritual depression the revolutionary democracy had not the moral courage and strength of character to withstand the united opposition of the bourgeois, imperialist and reactionary enemies of the new democracy. That is why so many vague and senseless compromises appeared during the Revolution and destroyed more than one great scheme of genuine reconstruction. The

worst effects of this tendency to compromise appeared in the inability to carry out the economic programme of the Revolution which the revolutionary democracy had formulated with such striking clearness. The revolutionary democracy was in a position to formulate a complete programme of economic reconstruction literally on the next day after the Revolution. Their foresight in this instance is probably less surprising. For the best economists of Russia—the truly creative school of Russian economists—belonged to the Socialist Party. The Economic Department of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates included some of the best-known economists, with a research section consisting of many of the younger economists of the Russian school.

In a few weeks after the Revolution, this Department presented to the Soviet its programme of economic reconstruction, which was afterwards discussed at the All-Russian Convention of the Soviets and definitely formulated as a resolution of the Executive Committee on the eve of the formation of the first Coalition Government. In the preamble to this resolution the Soviet expresses its awareness of the extreme seriousness of the situation :

“ The old régime fell to pieces just because it did not fulfil the task of systematic control of the national economy and industry, which was necessitated by the war.”

The Soviet foresees that the exhaustion and disintegration of the national economy, which is progressing with every day of the war, will inevitably lead to economic catastrophe, to social and political anarchy, and to the devastation of the country by the external foe ; unless the State is firmly and decisively resolved to intervene at once in the social and economic relations of the country. “ The State must intervene immediately, on all sides, and most energetically. The eleventh hour is already passed.”

Hence, in order to prevent economic disintegration

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and financial bankruptcy, the Government must immediately undertake a most *energetic State control of production and distribution*. It must introduce a new system of financial measures to prevent the further depreciation of the value of the rouble. And a larger share of the financial burden must be shifted on to the shoulders of the propertied classes.

The Soviet programme then emphasises the necessity of *State monopoly* in certain branches of industry, such as grain, meat, salt and leather. In other branches, such as coal and petroleum, metals, sugar and paper, *combines are to be formed under State control*. And throughout the whole of industry there must be *State control and State distribution of fuel and raw materials*, coupled with a fixation of prices. A maximum output is demanded, particularly a control of supplies in munitions, and an increase of the supplies for the civil population. There must be *State control and a rational distribution of the resources of the country in labour*. All workers who are needed for the important industries must be *combed-out from the army*, but there must also be a drastic revision of the lists of exemption in order not to deplete the army. *Energetic measures are demanded against idleness and social parasitism*.

The financial measures of the Soviet are based on the demand for a proportional increase in income-tax and death duties, for a heavy taxation of war-profits and unearned increment, for taxation of luxuries and for a levy on capital. In order to set capital free for war loans and State needs, speculations in land are to be prohibited. And, in the event of these measures being inadequate, the need of compulsory loans is foreseen.

In the concluding sentences the Soviet once more expresses its realisation of the great difficulties which confront the country :

“ It is enormously difficult to begin the struggle against economic disintegration in the 35th month of the war, which has exhausted all the economic forces of the nation. But the more difficult this task, the greater



the necessity of proceeding at once to its most energetic fulfilment.

*"The catastrophe is already on the country, and only the creative efforts of the whole people under the direction of the State can hope to save Russia. The State must consciously take on itself the gigantic task of saving the country, destroyed as it is by the ravages of war and of the Tsar's régime."*

This programme shows quite clearly that the revolutionary democracy was conscious that the exhaustion of the country had already reached the dimensions of a catastrophe, and that its first and foremost task was to find out ways and means of stopping the disintegration.

This economic and financial policy of the democracy, although representing a considerable change in the economic and social relations of the country, by no means constituted a social revolution. The free play of economic interests, whereby the minority was enriched in proportion as the majority became impoverished, was to be replaced by a new order, under which the State would take control of the economic activities of the country, setting a limit to the increasing wealth of the few, and guaranteeing a minimum of existence to the many. In this country, where people are becoming more and more conscious of the danger of economic exhaustion and of the imperative need of applying drastic measures of State control and State organisation, there is no need to emphasise that the above programme of the Soviet was not Socialism.

Had the democracy been allowed to carry out this programme, anarchy would have been checked, and the disintegration of Russian industry would have been arrested. Unfortunately this programme was never put into action, and State control was not applied till the October Revolution, when the Bolshevik State took over the mortal remains of what was once the industrial system of Russia.

The first Coalition Government was created with the threefold purpose: first, of inaugurating an "active"

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foreign policy in accordance with the ideals of the Revolution; secondly, of preparing for the nationalisation of the land; and, thirdly, of carrying out the above economic and industrial programme of State control. The programme of the Soviet was fully adopted by the Government, and yet nothing was done. It was now that the united opposition of the bourgeois parties began to assert itself. The cry was raised: "State control over industry—but that is Socialism!" And then began a clever and insistent propaganda, equipped with plausible and elastic arguments. The programme of the Soviet was declared to be doctrinaire and unreal.

The main argument was that such far-reaching "social revolution" could not be accomplished in one country alone—least of all in an economically backward and very little industrialised country like Russia. The opposition to State control was so strong that the manufacturers, financiers, and their political supporters even threatened to resist any such attempts by ceasing to carry on the management of industry. As a matter of fact, Konovalov, the very able Minister of Trade, already resigned from the Ministry, and it was evident that the bourgeois parties were prepared to fight. The "*sabotage*" which the bourgeois parties applied so effectively during the first months of the Bolshevik régime, was already looming ahead in these early days of the Revolution. The democracy was in an anxious frame of mind, and the bourgeois opposition succeeded in perplexing and eventually in splitting the democratic forces. The moderate elements tried to compromise with the Liberals, and as usual in such cases one compromise led to another, and State control, though still the centre of manifold discussions and conflicts, was actually shelved.

Meanwhile, the economic exhaustion of the country steadily progressed. The breakdown of the transport system was almost complete; the transport difficulty augmented the scarcity of coal and fuel, and the food



supplies grew worse and worse. The dearth was increasing on all sides. Short of introducing the system of State control, the only method of relieving distress and meeting popular discontent was to increase wages. And the bourgeoisie, which feared the State regulation of prices and profits more than fire, took the line of least resistance. The programme of reconstruction as elaborated by the Soviet was set aside, and in place of genuine economic reconstruction there was an increase of wages.

At first the workers were happy with their increase in wages. To understand their psychology it is necessary to remember what was their condition before the Revolution, and in what mood they entered it. There is manifold evidence to show that the exploitation and repression of labour in Russia during those three years of war had far exceeded anything that has been heard of in other countries. I need only quote one article from a Liberal paper, the Petrograd "*Den*" of March 30, 1917. "Few people have any imagination of the condition to which three years of war-work have reduced the working classes of Russia. . .

"The terror of the military autocracy was augmented by the tyranny of the workshop régime. . . . Into the unorganised masses of the workers, broken down by years of the most barbaric exploitation, the war-industrial régime entered with its autocratic demands, aggravated by executions, exiles, arrests, and a whole series of other repressive measures. It was augmented by a hellish intensification of labour, combined with an absolute neglect of the physical and moral needs and civic interests of the workers. These were years of a mad race, when, in addition to the most excessive overwork, the workers were perpetually underfed, almost to the extent of starvation. They were years of the most merciless terrorisation of the workers' life in all imaginable and unimaginable directions. Categorically they were required to work, and to work unceasingly, night and day, week-days and

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Sundays, all under the pretext of the lofty ideals of national self-defence. It was a merciless waste of the physical forces of the working classes; of adults and children, men and women alike. Those were indeed terrible years for the working classes."

The workers had been too much exploited all their lives to be able to ignore the sudden apparent relief of their position. They gladly accepted the increase of wages which was offered them in place of the economic policy which the revolutionary democracy had proposed. The moderate Socialist parties were glad of an opportunity of compromise with the propertied classes, and the more consistent elements, who realised that the mere increase of wages could only lead to disaster, were powerless to resist this mistaken policy. The increase of wages was accepted, and indeed, as time went on, actually demanded by the workers, and the vicious circle thus began. It was indeed a vicious circle, for the rise in wages led to a still greater increase in prices, and the increase in prices to a still greater rise in wages. Both these factors—the increase in wages and the rise in prices—demanded a corresponding increase of currency, and the inflation of the currency led to its still greater depreciation, and so to an increase in prices, which again had to be met by a rise in wages.\*

This process did not finish till industry was completely destroyed. The Bolshevik régime abruptly put a stop to this game, but, alas! it was too late.

\* Indeed, there are only two ways of meeting the case: either to put a stop to the rising prices of necessities, or else to increase the supply of money in the country. The former method is sound policy; the latter is bound to lead to disaster. But the former method means intervention in the sphere of private profits, and the present State, omnipotent as it is, yet stops short before this task. It is remarkable that the State, which does not shrink from demanding the very life of its subjects, and considers it right to prescribe to them the amount of food which they shall use and even to ration their leisure (the curfew)—in fact, to regulate and to ration their life from morning to evening—yet shrinks from intervening in the province of private property and profits.

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In this country, too, the chief method in combating the dearth is to increase the distribution of money rather than to control and limit prices and profits. The British workers have many times declared that they would like to see an effective check to the rise in prices, rather than an increase of wages. But the Government will rather tolerate the dangerous rise of wages than intervene drastically in the sanctuary of private property. In this country, too, the vicious circle of reciprocal action between raising of wages, increase of prices and inflation of currency has begun.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# THE DISORGANISATION OF AGRICULTURE

LET us now see how the war affected the other great component of Russia's national economy—her agriculture. If the exhaustion of industry was not appreciated till the very last hour, it is little wonder that the exhaustion of Russian agriculture is still looked upon as a paradox or a puzzle. Indeed at first sight it is puzzling. Russia is the largest agricultural country in Europe, and one of the largest in the world. She was the granary of Europe. By far the greater part of her exports consisted of products of the soil. Hence, when the war put an end to her foreign trade and Russia could no longer export the surplus of her grain, she ought rather to have suffered from plenty than from scarcity. It is therefore easy to understand that Europe was shocked when—first rumours—and then the sheer fact that Petrograd and Moscow had been put on rations, became known. That Russia was threatened by famine seemed too absurd, too incredible. Even in Russia itself the food question was not taken seriously for many months. When real starvation was imminent, nobody could explain where the misfortune came from. People ironically shrugged their shoulders and said: "Well, in Russia anything can happen!" And yet, there was nothing puzzling in the agricultural crisis of Russia. The only puzzling thing was the incredible stupidity and the absence of foresight of those who were conducting this war.

To begin with, Russian agriculture never was sound and healthy. Russia lived permanently in a state of agricultural crisis. Famine, or at least semi-starva-

tion, was habitual in rural Russia. Great districts, year after year, were in such straits that the peasants had to apply to the Government or to the Zemstvos for help. The supply of extra seed-grain was a regular thing; but in many cases corn had to be supplied to the population for subsistence till the next harvest. The former was known as "*semenaia pomoshch*" (help with seed), the latter as "*prodovolstvennaia pomoshch*" (victualling help), and this was one of the regular and chief functions of the Zemstvos.

There were many reasons for this deplorable state of affairs. The main reason certainly was the insufficient size of the small holdings held by the peasants, and the scarcity of agricultural implements and manure. Then there was the great indebtedness of the peasants to the State, which did not scruple to take away their horses and cattle and even their agricultural implements in payment of taxes overdue; and finally the lack of scientific knowledge and the primitive agricultural methods of the peasantry.

The war stopped the import of agricultural machinery altogether, and this led very quickly to a virtual crisis, because worn-out implements could not be replaced nor broken ones properly and quickly repaired. Again, the import of artificial manures, which always had been very small, ceased altogether. This was a very severe blow at Russian agriculture, but the mobilisation of horses for the war was even worse. To understand what the mobilisation of horses meant to Russian agriculture, it must be realised that in Russia there always was a great scarcity of horses. Not only in agriculture, but in Russia's transport system this scarcity was very acutely felt. As a matter of fact, the majority of peasant households in Russia are "*odnoloshadniki*," or one-horse households, and this one horse not only has to work in the fields, but also to perform the manifold transport duties for the household. Now the Russian army required an immense number of horses, on which their artillery and transport system almost entirely



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depended. And the chief burden of the mobilisation fell on the peasants, since horses in regular use for transport could less easily be interfered with. Peasant households having two horses had to give up one, and many of the one-horse households had to do without. The decrease of horses in Russia was felt immediately the war broke out, but it became more and more acute, for the drain on horses for war purposes never ceased. It will be felt for many years to come, for a very small proportion of the mobilised horses will ever return to civil employment. An enormous number died for want of fodder, especially last year, in addition to those which were killed or lost in the campaigns.

The deficiency in agricultural implements and the mobilisation of horses would alone have had a fatal effect on Russian agriculture. But, in addition, the war, of course, made a huge demand on man-power.

During three years of war about 20 million men were mobilised in Russia.\* The land was practically left to women, unfit men, and children; and they had to do, without machines and horses, work which used to be very unsatisfactorily done with all the men and all the horses to help. The result was two-fold. On the one hand, a considerable diminution of the area under cultivation (estimated at about 20 per cent.) ; on the other hand, a permanent decrease in yield.

With all these things taken into consideration, it will still be said that Russia should not have suffered any scarcity. For the cessation of all exports—however bad for Russian finance and industry—was to the immediate advantage of the consumers. It kept in the country thousands of tons of grain which would have been exported in normal times. But there was yet another factor. The war not only stopped the export of grain

\* It is a curious fact, but very characteristic of Tsarist Russia, that the General Staff and the War Office never knew the exact number of mobilised men. Though the Revolutionary Government several times insisted on exact returns, the General Staff was never able to comply with this demand. The estimate of twenty millions was made by the Provisional Government,



abroad; it also created a new source of consumption of grain—the army at the Front. The same men in civil life would eat much or little according as the times were good or bad, according to what they had in stock. But a soldier has to be fed, fed continually, and fed well. The needs of the army demanded a continuous and regular supply of grain.

The peasants had to supply the army, and the army consumed hardly less, probably more, than Russia used to export in peace time. The requirements of the army would have absorbed all the surplus of grain remaining in the country even if the area under cultivation had remained the same. But owing to the diminution of tillage and yield, the regular consumption of the army considerably surpassed the actual surplus. Before the war Russia used to export one-third of her cereal products, and two-thirds were consumed in the country. In the very first year of the war the whole of the surplus which would normally have been exported was taken over by the Government for the army. But, as the war dragged on, and the army grew in numbers, and the production correspondingly decreased, so a greater and greater proportion was taken for the army. In 1917, according to the statement made by Shingariov\* in May of that year, the civil population was getting a little more than a third of the yearly production.

The removal of millions of men and horses from production is in itself sufficient to account for the agricultural crisis of Russia. But to understand thoroughly how Russia as an agricultural country became so poor during the war, it is necessary to consider two more factors. First, the increase in the consumption of agricultural products in the country; and, secondly, the slackening of economic inducements towards the intensification of work. It is a deplorable fact that the peasantry, while they consumed more, actually became less industrious as the war went on.

\* Shingariov—the tragically murdered Minister of Agriculture in the first Provisional Government.

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The soldiers were certainly fed out of all proportion to their accustomed fare in the villages. Not only was their bread ration higher than the quantity habitually consumed by the most well-fed Russian workers, but in addition they had a daily meat ration. In peace time meat was certainly very little consumed in the villages, and even the town workers were accustomed to a very limited ration of meat. In peace time the soldiers themselves were fed, not on meat, but on "*shchi*" (cabbage soup) and "*kasha*" (porridge made of buckwheat). The meat crisis in Russia, which already in 1916 became a literal famine, is to be ascribed entirely to the methods of army feeding. But, even so, probably the greater part of the enormous quantity of food absorbed by the army is accounted for by waste and mismanagement.

The consumption of the town population also increased at the beginning of the war. The abolition of alcohol was partly responsible for this increase. Not only did the town workers save more money to be spent on food, but abstinence actually increased their appetites. The example of Russia confirms the established fact that drunkards spend less on food because they prefer to spend more on drink, and actually they feel hunger less. But while the consumption of the town population increased, that of the peasantry increased relatively much more.

I am afraid it is impossible to give an adequate idea to English readers of how Russian peasants were accustomed to be fed. Were I simply to say that in large districts the Russian peasants lived in a perpetual state of semi-starvation, it would nevertheless be impossible for the English reader to grasp the situation. Even "semi-starvation," as understood in Western Europe, would probably be considered waste and plenty in a Russian village. Without giving statistics to show how little the Russian peasants made use of milk, meat, eggs, butter, or even bread, I need only quote one short story of Turgenev to indicate their extreme poverty :

“ Once an old lady went to visit an old peasant widow who had on that same day buried her only son. The lady was shocked to find the old peasant woman eating *shchi*, and angrily asked her whether she loved her son and how it was possible for her to have an appetite under the circumstances. ‘ Vasia is dead,’ answered the widow in a low voice, and the tears began again to run down her hollow cheeks. ‘ My end is therefore come too. But the *shchi* shouldn’t be wasted ; the salt had been already put in it.’ ”

It will be said : this was long ago, and matters must have improved since then. But when all allowances are made, this story confirms the statement that the meals of a Russian peasant were never really plentiful !

With the war, however, a great change began in the consumption of the peasants. They became reluctant to sell their grain and used it more and more for themselves. This reluctance to sell increased with every year of the war—not only in accordance with the maxim that “ *l’appétit vient en mangeant*, ” but for a simple economic reason. The peasants discovered, by and by, that in spite of the large sums of money they could get for their products they were really no better off. On the contrary, they found that their condition was becoming worse ; that it was becoming more and more difficult to buy for money the necessities of their peasant life and work. Money had become useless to them. They would have been glad to exchange their grain for the things they needed, but these they could not buy in the market, and the State was equally unable to provide them. Thus, at the same time they not only consumed more of their grain and cattle themselves, but actually had less and less economic inducement to produce more than they needed for their own subsistence.

So we see that the disorganisation of Russian agriculture is as little a puzzle as her economic exhaustion and the ruin of her industry and transport. But I ought not to leave this subject without indicating

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another factor which contributed a great deal to the terrible position of Russia. I mean the immense stores of supplies which the retreating armies destroyed or left in the hands of the enemy. The real amount of these stores will never be known, but there is little doubt that it must have been enormous. A soldier said to me once when I was in Russia : " When we saw that in a certain place they (meaning the High Command) were beginning to accumulate big supplies of grain, fodder, trucks, ammunitions, then we knew that this place was shortly to be given up to the enemy." — This accusation of treachery may be only a prejudice on the part of the soldiers. However, the story conveys the right impression, that retreats were always followed by destruction or loss of enormous quantities of supplies.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SPECULATION AND PROFITEERING

SO far I have indicated the main factors in the economic exhaustion of Russia caused by the war. But for a thorough understanding of the situation which led up to the Revolution it is necessary also to consider the lesser factors.

One of these lesser factors was the growth of speculation and profiteering immediately the war broke out. I have already referred to the crowd of speculators who flocked to Scandinavia and Roumania directly after the outbreak of war to obtain substitutes for goods previously imported from or through Germany. In spite of a certain rapaciousness in their methods and their real "war appetite," these speculators performed on the whole a useful economic function. They helped to increase the imports of goods at a time when those imports were a most vital need to the State, and no doubt the energy and enterprise of these men to a large extent helped to mitigate the crisis. Indeed, as I indicated in the third chapter, the restriction and the so-called "regulation" of the imports by the Government even worked to the detriment of the national economy.

But there were others, whose speculations had no conceivable positive economic value, since they did not increase the quantity of necessary goods in the country. Their number was enormous and their activity ruinous. Speculation became a matter of everyday life in Russia. Everybody speculated. The manufacturer, the banker, the merchant, the shop-keeper—all of them speculated. But so also did every clerk in the manufacturer's office, every clerk at the bank, the shop-assistants, the railway officials and the staff of transport companies. The stockbrokers speculated professionally, the middlemen



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for their living; newspaper reporters speculated for amusement and fashionable men and women for the sake of adventure. And above all these big and small speculators the Government officials assumed an honourable place as chief speculators.

I once saw in a Russian music-hall an amusing little scene in which two professional dancers made a deal on a consignment of "*Hydroquinone*" during a performance of the "tango." The curious thing is that this is scarcely a caricature. It is a fact that deals were made during any time of the day between the most fashionable and the queerest people, in the most incredible articles whose very existence they had probably never heard of before. Speculations were made in cafés, banks, factories, railway stations, theatres, gambling houses, on the streets and in trains. There were speculations in land and grain, speculation in money and the rate of exchange—in fact, in every kind of goods. The speculation in goods-trucks I have already mentioned.\*

There is no need for me to-day to explain the detrimental economic effects of these transactions. Certainly, they have nowhere grown to such an enormous extent as in Russia, and nowhere else have they appeared in such monstrous and grotesque forms. But they exist in all belligerent countries in Europe. In all countries, people know what it means when a certain article suddenly disappears from the market and reappears after a certain time when the prices have risen considerably higher. By this time people everywhere know what to think of the merchants when the latter suddenly become very patriotic and refuse to sell their goods except in small quantities.

Such speculation is certainly not peculiar to Russia.

\* In his book "Russia in 1916," referred to above, Mr. Stephen Graham writes: "The people who have made money by the war are busy buying land and houses. This is *reproachfully* called 'land speculation,' *but is in reality common-sense action* on the part of those who wish to make fast their wealth." Page 101. (The italics are mine.)



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It is a curse of the economic conditions of war-time. I consider it very important to emphasise that the difference between Russia and other belligerent countries—Allied or Enemy—in this respect is a difference in degree, not a difference in kind. In this country speculators are called profiteers. In Russia the profiteers are called “marauders in the rear.”

The same difference is to be observed in the effects of speculation and profiteering upon the morale of the people in Russia and in other countries. The greater the curse, the more deplorable the moral effect. In Russia the speculations and the profiteering were so open and so mean that the eyes of the broad masses of the people were opened at a comparatively early stage of the war. In other countries profiteering and speculation in the war are milder and the people are still not fully aware of the part played by the profit-making supporters of the war in bringing about their misery.

I have mentioned that the actual want was felt in Russia, in Petrograd and Warsaw and other big towns at any rate, almost literally on the next day after war broke out. This is to be attributed to the activities of the speculators. They at once began to conceal their stocks and to buy and store goods. The broad masses of the town population saw at once that the war had opened two roads—the one leading to misery and destitution and the other to enormous and easy profits. This period was called the “bacchanalia of profits.”

There was another vivid expression to characterise an economic phenomenon which, once more, while not peculiar to Russia, grew to the most appalling dimensions in that country. I mean “the mad race of paper millions.” Indeed, it would be impossible to describe the situation better. Russia’s war finance was thoroughly unhealthy. Never was the country poorer, and never were the very few richer than during this terrible war. It was really a mad race of profits. Fortunes of a legendary character were made actually out of nothing. Millions, thousands of millions flooded

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the country. And while more and more millions were being printed and distributed amongst the manufacturers, Government contractors, bankers and merchants; food, housing, fuel and clothing became dearer and scarcer every day, and the life of the masses became more difficult, the sacrifices of the workers and peasants more intolerable.

The contrast of profits and sacrifices is not peculiar to Russia, but certainly in no country has it become so hideous as in Russia, nor was this race of millions so mad in any other country as it was in Russia.

But in the series of phenomena which mark the economic ruin of Russia there is one which was typically Russian. I refer to the hoarding of money. In this country we are acquainted with many objectionable forms of hoarding, but there can be not the slightest doubt that the hoarding of money has been, so far, excluded. And the same probably applies to all the other belligerent countries. Apart from the ethical objections to this practice, the hoarding of money, and particularly of gold coin, is bound to have the most terrible effect on the finance and economy of the country. The withdrawal of money from circulation necessitates the issue of further supplies of paper money, and the hoarding of gold diminishes the "gold covering" of the paper money and leads to an even greater depreciation of the currency.

Nothing could reveal the unhealthy state of affairs in Russia during the war more clearly than this hoarding of money. In emphasising the corrupt nature of the Tsarist Government, people are apt to forget that this unhealthy state was not peculiar to the Government. The whole of the country was diseased. And if this phenomenon of hoarding alone had been better realised and understood in this country, there would have been less surprise and less miscalculation during the war and after the Revolution.

At the beginning of the war Russia, like all other belligerent countries, withdrew gold coins from circula-

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tion. As in all other belligerent countries, an appeal was made for the return of gold coin to the banks in exchange for paper money. In this country, as well as in France and in Germany, such appeals brought in many millions of gold money back to the State Banks. But in Russia gold coins were hoarded and all appeals for their return were useless. There was not even any attempt to conceal the hoarding.\*

But it was not only gold which disappeared. At the beginning of the retreat of the Russian Army from the Carpathians even silver money vanished from circulation. This led to veritable panic among the poor, and they too began to hoard money. But they had to be satisfied with copper. Thus the rapacious instincts of the rich, who stole the country's gold and silver from the people, led to a revenge by the poor, who proceeded to hoard the copper.\*\*

However, that was not yet the end. The propertied classes continued to hoard money, and when gold and silver was in safety they began to withdraw paper money—the more valuable notes of 1,000, 500 and 100

\* Mr. Stephen Graham writes: "There is reason to believe that there are a number of millions of gold coins being hoarded in the country. *Friends have shown me their private supplies.*" (The italics are mine) "Russia in 1916," page 101. Holy Russia at that time obviously disregarded any considerations of national interests. The appeal to "higher national interest" was only put forward by them and their friends in this country when the Bolshevik State made an attempt to confiscate their "private supplies."

\*\* Mr. Stephen Graham in the same book has some very interesting reflections. "*Thorough Government action swiftly followed* and paper tokens for all the small coins were introduced." . . . "Thoughtful people welcomed it (the paper money for 1, 2, 3, and 5 kopecks) as teaching the ignorant that money has no value in itself, but only as a token of exchange." . . . "Perhaps, however, the war and the substitution of paper for coin has taught some people to care less for money." . . . These philosophical reflections, as usual, are wound up by a compliment to the Russian soul. "The Russian word (for money) is '*dengi*,' which is really a Tartar word." (The italics are mine.) "Russia in 1916," pages 103, 104.

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roubles. They preferred to be deprived of profits and interest on their money, if only they could have more money in safety.

The State tried reprisals. It was decided that for railway tickets it was necessary to pay in gold. But that led to riots; for the gold was hoarded by the rich, while the majority of the travellers were middle-class people, workers and peasants. In order to pay for their tickets they had to run everywhere for gold pieces and to pay exorbitant prices for them. After a short time the demand had to be withdrawn. Equally ineffective were the attempts to coerce the private banks and the private clients of the State Bank. Thus it came about that just before the Revolution and for some time afterwards the highest bank note in circulation was practically 25 roubles. And practically all payments had to be made in 10, 5, and 3 rouble notes. Imagine large sums amounting to thousands of roubles being paid in 3-rouble notes! This created an enormous economic difficulty, which was moreover considerably augmented owing to the very meagre development of the cheque system in Russia.

When all this is said, is there any need to dwell specially on the state of mind of the people and the soldiers? It was certainly very gloomy. The soldiers, being half-slaves, received nothing—a mere few pence per month. Their wives and children actually died of hunger and cold on the poor separation allowances made to soldiers' dependents. And the workers themselves received beggarly wages.\* Yet all the time the country was swamped with millions. Joint-stock companies and banks issued new stocks, doubling and trebling their capital. Rumours ran from end to end of the country, telling of legendary incomes and

\* The enormous rise in wages after the Revolution is to a great extent explained by the truly beggarly wages during the war. The excessive demands of the workers are made to appear still more stupendous by comparing them with the beggarly pre-revolutionary wages.



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monstrous profits. The truth was fantastic enough, but rumour made it even more so. It spoke of stupendous salaries taken by bank and company directors—of salaries amounting to millions of roubles a year.

The situation was thoroughly unhealthy. Russia was in a state of disease. In the midst of the most terrible war and amid the general impoverishment, an unprecedented business was done in jewellery, expensive furs and other articles of luxury. It was the prevailing fashion—one might almost call it the prevailing sport—in the vast army of speculators, contractors and profiteers, to pay fabulous prices for champagne and foreign liqueurs, simply because their sale and consumption were prohibited by law.

The Court and Government conducted the war in the spirit and by the methods of a desperate gambler. Their mentality was poor and simple. They played to save their skins; they were in deadly terror of being overthrown, and their one thought was to consolidate their position. Indeed the spirit of the Court and of the Government was gloomy and dejected. Not so was the feeling of the propertied classes. They had no reason to be pessimistic. They bothered themselves very little about victory or defeat. The main thing for them was the continuance of the war, for there never were such fabulous profits in times of peace. The propertied classes lived in an unreal world of millions. They saw only millions, and ran after them.

Russia at that time, in fact, revived the mentality of another stormy period in history. The Court and Government of Russia repeated the principle of the French Government before the Great Revolution—"Après nous le déluge"; and the Russian bourgeoisie revived the watchword, "Enrichissez vous."

And down below there suffered and struggled for existence an obscure and hungry and despondent people. It dimly felt the approaching catastrophe; it saw the Government gambling to save their own skins; it saw the propertied classes poisoned and mad in their

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race for profits. And when the sufferings became too bitter and the catastrophe too near, the people rose at last to take control themselves. Is it any wonder that the people, in taking control, were not satisfied with the overthrow of the Government, but called the propertied classes to account as well?



Part III : Disintegration of the  
Russian Army



## CHAPTER NINE

### THE RUSSIAN SOLDIER

**I** HAVE now to deal with the most important but at the same time the most delicate problem of all. I have to try to explain how it came about that the Russian Army disintegrated.

The Russian soldier has been very much praised during the war. From the time of the reckless dash of the Russian Army into East Prussia in a true spirit of comradeship in order to save Paris, all hearts were open to the Russian soldier in the Entente countries. Thus, the Russian soldier became the hero of French and English men and women. But since the Revolution nobody has been more blamed and insulted in France and Great Britain than the Russian soldier. It is the Russian soldier who "will not fight," and has "sold Russia" and let down her Allies. It is the Russian soldier who has destroyed Russia's railways and plunged Russia into anarchy and chaos.

As a matter of fact, just as there was probably too much praise for the Russian soldier during the first three years of the war, so there has undoubtedly been too much blame in the past year. Instead of praising or blaming him, it is necessary to try to unveil the mystery of the Russian soldier, to try to understand what he was and how he lived, and what were the effects of the war upon him. One thing is certain: people in this country not only do not know anything about the Russian soldier—they have not the least idea of even a rough standard of comparison by which to judge him. Some people of course believe, in their simplicity, that all soldiers and all armies are more or less alike. They therefore imagine that the Russian soldier is similar to the British, French, or American soldier. Others, who happen to know that the

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principles of discipline and the organisation of the Russian army are taken from Germany, are too easily led to the conclusion that the Russian army is similar to the German army.

Both these notions are wrong, and it is doubtful which of the two is farther from the truth. The Russian soldier certainly has very little in common with the French, British or American soldier. And, while the organisation of the Russian army and the foundation of its disciplinary system are certainly modelled on the German system, the Russian army resembles the German army only in external form. The real inward elements of discipline and organisation in the two armies are distinct.

Take, first of all, the status of the army in the two countries. It is radically and absolutely different. In Germany the army has always been considered the most important national institution. The place of the army in Germany is similar to the position of the navy in English social life. The army in Germany, like the navy in England, has always been considered the foundation and guarantee of the State. Many great and living traditions have made "*Unser Heer*" the pride of the nation, and thus it is the highest pride of every German to be a part of the army.

It is true that a minority of thinking Germans, especially among the Socialists, have had an outspoken dislike of the army, or, at any rate, some suspicion of it and prejudice against it. But on the whole it is beyond doubt that the army in Germany is liked by the entire people, and admired and even worshipped. To be rejected from the army, to be unfit for military service, amounted to a popular disgrace, and a German would tell a lie rather than admit in public that he had been rejected from the army. It would, however, be a misunderstanding to suppose that the life of a German soldier (I mean in peace time) was a particularly pleasant one. Nothing of the sort. On the contrary, the German soldier's life was very hard indeed. It meant very

hard labour for two years. But to be a soldier was to be on duty at the highest post in the State, and the ordinary German was ready and proud to undergo the hardships of soldiering.

It is indeed hard to find a greater contrast than that which exists between this German view of military service and the view which generally obtains in Russia. In Russia the army never was popular. The army was never worshipped, never loved, never admired. It was always considered as an evil. Some people were ready to admit that it was a necessary evil, but the broad masses of the people, who never understood nor cared to understand the "world politics" of the Empire, felt the greatest reluctance in admitting that this evil was a necessary one. The real feeling of the people towards the soldier and the army was one of fear. The army was alien to the people, almost hostile to it. There were no traditions which could make the army a national or a popular institution. The Napoleonic war was Russia's last defensive war and received the proud title "*Otechestvennaia Voina*," which means the war for the safety of the Fatherland. Since then for more than a century there were no more defensive wars in Russia. At any rate, there were no wars which were considered by the people as defensive wars and as deserving the proud name of a "fatherland war." Incidentally it is curious to note that an attempt was made to give the name of "*Otechestvennaia Voina*" to this war. Many newspapers used to publish the war news under the heading, "The Second Fatherland War." But there was no real response from the people, and after a short time it was evident that the attempt to glorify this war was a failure.

The army never was regarded by the Russian people as a safeguard or a guarantee of the State; it was always felt as an instrument of oppression. It was never felt nor thought of as a part of the nation. It was not of the people; it was over the people, it dominated them. Thus, to become a soldier was not

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only to be lost to the community—it was tantamount to going over to the enemy of the people.

In the early days of the modern Russian army, soldiers actually had to be forced into the army. It was like the forcible recruiting of subjugated peoples in a conquered land. And it is only natural that the people were opposed, body and soul, to these recruitings. But even to-day, when conscription has existed in Russia for over half a century, people look upon enlistment as a misfortune or a calamity—still more as a degradation. This is true of the conscripts themselves, as well as of their relations. It applies equally to the town population and to the peasants. And up to the very last day (I mean before the war) the calling-up period, or, as it is called in Russian, “*nabor*,” the levy, was always a time of mourning, not to say of outrages and disorders. The authorities always used to encourage drunkenness at these periods, and the people were glad to treat the recruits, considering that drunkenness would make it easier for them to undergo the disgrace and the calamity of becoming soldiers.

And yet, objectively, a soldier's life might have been regarded by the Russian peasant as rather a pleasant and useful experience. In the army, the young recruit generally had his first impression of townsfolk and town life; and often he obtained a little smattering of knowledge, learning to read and write. On returning to his village a peasant soldier might play the rôle of an experienced “man about town.” But, in fact, it was seldom that a “former soldier” came into prominence. His reputation as a soldier excluded him from the trust and esteem of his fellow-peasants. In spite of his experience, a “former soldier” was seldom entrusted with any office in the village commune. All the more frequently did he fill the ranks of the hated village police force (the so-called village guard or “*strazhnik*”). The police in the towns and the infamous political police or gendarmerie were former soldiers almost to a man.

The Russian workers, the students, and the whole of



the intelligentsia hated the army consciously as the instrument of oppression and the tool of the autocracy. On their part, it was a frank and unsparing animosity, a glowing hatred. The broad masses of the people certainly could not share this animosity—and yet the fear of the army and the dislike of a soldier's life were even greater among simple people. It was the blind fear of a primitive man before a gigantic machine. The very mechanical nature of the army terrified the peasants. A soldier has no soul, no individuality. In the army there are no more Ivans, Peters, or Nicolas—there are only soldier parts of a machine which hems them in and crushes their individuality.

To be conscripted was almost the same as to be put into prison. The one and the other were God's punishment for one's sins. To be conscripted was to be lost not only bodily but even more mentally. So it was that women wept in the streets before a recruiting office almost as bitterly as at a funeral. In the National Museum at Petrograd there is exhibited a famous picture by Savitzky, representing the farewell to a recruit at the railway station. I fancy that during all these years of war there has never been at Victoria Station a scene even approximately suggesting that classical farewell to a Russian recruit in peace time.

I will not attempt to explain this dislike and fear of the army in Russia. I believe it to be an indication of the native pacificism of the Russian people: it may be something more complex. But I am concerned to point out the fact that the Russian army was never an object of popularity, affection or esteem to the Russian people. It was always only tolerated as an evil.

Let me make this clear by quoting a few popular proverbs and folk sayings:—

*V rekruchinu—shto v mogilu.*

Called up is buried.

*Soldat domoi pishet, pominat' velit.*

A soldier writes home, asking prayers for his soul.

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*Soldat otrezannyi lomot'.*

A soldier is a slice of bread (i.e., lost, cut off).

*Soldatu ni v raiu ni v adu miesta niet.*

A soldier has no place in heaven or in hell.

There are many sayings referring to the very immoral life of a soldier. A soldier is always wild, pillages everything, steals whatever he can lay hands on, and never pays for what he takes. In fact in all respects he is a most ill-conditioned person.

*Na to on i soldat, shtoby buianit'.*

That's what he's a soldier for—for debauchery.

*Soldat idiëtt selom i smotrit krugom.*

A soldier goes through the village and looks round (what he can loot).

*U soldata niet karmanöv, a vsio spriachetsia.*

A soldier has no pockets, but he can put away anything.

*Za soldatom pishi propalo.*

If a soldier has taken it, then goodbye!

*Soldat tol'ko na moroze da no ognie krasneiet.*

A soldier blushes only at frost or fire.

*Soldat blizko, klaniaisia iemu nizko.*

Bend low before an approaching soldier.

*Soldat shto volk; shto popalo, to i rviot.*

A soldier is like a wolf. He tears everything he meets.

*Soldat shto bagor. Zatsepil potashchil.*

A soldier is like a hook. What he fastens he takes away.

The word "*Soldat*"—soldier—is often used in contumely. "*Soldafon*" is a term of foul abuse. "*Po soldatski*," or "like a soldier" (which is a great compliment in this country), in Russia is an indication of something very low, rude, uneducated, and insulting. "*Soldatiet*," meaning to adopt soldier's manners, to behave like a soldier, is another term of contempt. Such were the feelings of the people towards the soldier, and such were their thoughts about a soldier's life. What about the feelings of the soldiers themselves?

“ *Vesioloiç gore—soldatskaia zhizn* ” (“Gay sorrow, that is a soldier’s life”) : thus did the soldiers themselves map out their lives. There is another soldier’s saying, which is difficult to translate, but which means the same : “ *Krasnaia nuzhda—soldatskaia sluzhba* ”— (“ the soldier’s service is a feast of troubles and privations ”).

In effect, the life of a Russian soldier, though occasionally gay, even rakish and unbridled, was generally full of sorrow, anxiety and terror. This anxiety, this atmosphere of fear and frightfulness, was by no means accidental. It was the main factor in the discipline of the Russian Army. The method of Russian discipline was unmitigated frightfulness, and its aim was to reduce the soldier to absolute obedience. In order to be absolute, obedience must be automatic; and therefore the soldier must learn by way of frightfulness that no compromise is possible. Any order must be executed without delay or questioning—even the order to shoot one’s own parents or sisters or brothers. In this country a soldier does his duty, and the better he understands his duty the better he is able to perform it. But the Russian soldier may not even know what duty means. Instead, he has to obey. His docility must be absolute and unswerving. He must not think, still less ask for any explanation. He simply must obey any order. He must not question nor consider, still less criticise the orders of his superior officers. There can be no such thing as a wrong order. “ *Nachalstvo*,” i.e., the “authority,” is the highest embodiment of wisdom and virtue. Therefore the summit of wisdom and virtue in a soldier is to obey unhesitatingly the commands of the authority. “ *Nachalstvo*,” or authority, means every officer or non-commissioned officer; but in practice the lower the rank of an officer the greater was his power. The corporal, the sergeant, and above all, the sergeant-major—or to use his Russo-German name, the “ *Feldwebel* ”—he was the highest or rather the All-highest authority. The sergeant or *feldwebel* did not

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merely stand for wisdom and virtue ; he was, as it were, God himself. The life of a soldier, his personal liberty, the degree of his hardship, the amount of his leisure or work—all this depended entirely on the goodwill of the sergeant or the feldwebel. There were indeed a multitude of rules and regulations, but rules were merely a dead letter, while the decision of the sergeant was omnipotent. Thus the favour of the sergeant had to be bought by bribes or by flattery. A soldier had to humble himself and to go through many humiliations.

The position and power of the sergeant and the feldwebel accounted for much, for their influence was not only heavy but evil. As a matter of fact the promotion of a soldier to the rank of corporal or sergeant always depended on his special devotedness to the reactionary aims of Russian discipline and the cult of authority. A certain amount of intelligence and skill was certainly needed, but cruelty of character was, to say the least of it, an equally necessary qualification. The feldwebel was a professional soldier, carefully selected and specially trained. He became the real terror and nightmare of the ordinary Russian soldier.

Even outside the barracks and in his leisure time, the soldier was never free or independent. He never escaped the vigilant eye of the nachalstvo. A soldier was certainly not a citizen ; he was hardly even considered a human being. He was always a mere private. The peasants and the simple people used to call the soldiers "*Seraia Bozhia skotinka*," i.e., "God's poor little grey cattle," and this expression at any rate was not used in any contemptuous or offensive mood. On the contrary, a deep and sincere pity and love are expressed in this odd compliment. But it sufficiently conveys an idea of the status of a soldier and of his treatment under authority. His every step was under control, and might lead him into conflict—not only with the regulations—but with the opinion, mood or temper of the first officer or sergeant whom he might chance to meet.

The life of a Russian soldier was a virtual torture. This torture, as has been said, was the very aim of the system, and was intended to make the soldier into an absolutely obedient machine without a will or a soul of his own. But not only the soldiers—the officers themselves, especially in the lower ranks, were similarly dragooned. They had to obey unquestioningly, and to undergo as many humiliations. And the more they themselves were humiliated by their superiors, the more heavily they worked the soldiers, the more drastically they tortured them. Only the soldier had no one upon whom to revenge himself. He simply accumulated dull hatred and dissatisfaction and tried, if he got the chance, to forget himself in a debauch of drunkenness and sensuality.

It would take me too far afield if I were to begin to cite instances of Russian discipline and of its methods. I will merely give one example of the many humiliations an officer had to undergo; it will probably help the reader to realise how the whole system worked.

When a Russian officer, no matter of what rank, entered a restaurant or a café, he first had to look round the whole place to see if any other officer of higher rank were present. If he found one, he had to approach him, salute him and ask his permission to remain. Only after receiving permission might he sit down and order anything to eat or drink. In the meantime, all officers of lower rank than the newly-arrived officer had to stand up at the salute and wait until they were invited to sit down by the newcomer. Soldiers certainly were never supposed to go to a place which officers were likely to frequent. Again, in theatres, all officers had to stand up during the intervals facing the Imperial box—no matter whether one of the Imperial family were present or the box was empty. Only when the performance began again were they allowed to sit down in their places. Privates as a rule could not visit theatres at all. Only in rare cases could they get a permit, and then only for the gallery.



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This so-called discipline was indeed very useful to the autocracy in peace time, because the authorities could always rely on the army. But war was another matter. Russian discipline not only did not train the soldiers for war, but actually destroyed in every soldier and in the army as a whole the instinct and the skill for war. The very obedience which was so great an asset in peace time, when the soldier had to fight against his own people during revolutionary risings—this blind obedience was a grave impediment in war. Certainly in war, too, the soldier's obedience is very necessary. But in war it must be based not on fear but on confidence in the skill and devotedness of the leaders. Blind obedience will not do in war. In war you have to rely on the soldier's ability—you must accustom him to think and to act, not only to obey.

Now fear inevitably creates hatred, and the Russian army was indeed permeated with active hatred. It is really difficult to say whether the officers and non-commissioned officers in the Russian army were more feared or more hated. In peace time fear was all-powerful, but in war hatred was likely to come to the top. In fact, this hatred, so effectively cultivated in the soldiers by the old régime, was only waiting for its opportunity.

That the soldiers would one day take their revenge was a fixed idea in Russia, not only among the general public, but among the officers and even among the soldiers themselves. The officers, as a matter of fact, were in perpetual fear lest at any time the soldiers should rise in revolt. Probably the method of frightfulness was to a large extent determined by this fear of the soldier's revenge. And this revenge was feared most especially in war time. It was believed that the soldiers could easily revenge themselves when on active service. The soldiers often intimated that during war the first shot would do justice to the most hated officer.

It was for this reason that a rapid and panic-stricken exchange of officers between the several regiments



and companies preceded or accompanied a general mobilisation. At any rate, such was the practice during previous wars. I am not sure that such an exchange took place during the mobilisation for this war. It is quite likely that the popular enthusiasm for this war induced the officers to trust the men and to make an exception to the rule of exchanged commands this time. Possibly the soldiers themselves actually forgot their hatred of the officers at the beginning of this war. But the hatred was certainly only in abeyance, and ready to emerge and break forth again at a later stage.

There is one thing which at first sight seems to contradict the gloomy picture which I have presented. I refer to the splendid military history of Russia. The Russian army fought well and achieved great victories; the Russian soldier earned his name as a brave and gallant fighter. All this is quite true, but it does not contradict anything that I have said. For the great reputation of the Russian army was made during the wars of the middle of the 19th century, while the rigid discipline which was to make the Russian soldier an obedient instrument of the autocracy only came into prominence during the last 30 or 40 years. And in the two great wars which Russia waged during this period, she was twice defeated. It must also be added that the wars against Turkey had a national and religious stimulus. There was a real enthusiasm for these wars and a real understanding of their justice. To this day the Turk is considered by the Russian peasants and simple people as *the* enemy. I remember once in Odessa, many years ago, I happened to witness the sending off of the Russian detachments to China during the Boxer rising. A General made a speech to the soldiers and explained to them all about the Boxers and the necessity for the Russian Empire to fight the Chinese. At the close of his speech he asked, "Now, bratsy, whom are you going to beat?" "The Turks, your High Excellency," was the prompt reply. Such was and is the feeling of the Russian soldiers towards

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the Turks. And it is only natural that in these wars the national and religious stimulus overrode any other passions and impulses in the soldiers.

Such was the Russian soldier and such were the principles and forms of discipline in the Russian army. And it should have been clear enough, after the terrible experience of the Russo-Japanese war, that the Russian army was hardly fitted to stand the test of a prolonged war of moral endurance and tenacity.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE ARMY AND THE WAR

NOW let us see what happened to the army during the war. I am very sorry that I was not in Russia in the first eight days of the mobilisation and did not see the send-off of the Petrograd garrison, notably of the Imperial Guard, on their way to the front. I imagine that when they went the war spirit and patriotic upheaval of the people was at its highest. On my return to Russia I witnessed the endless march of troops from the provinces through Petrograd. And I must state that the absence of any patriotic enthusiasm or even of any excitement or high temper *among the soldiers themselves* struck me very forcibly at that time.

The troops as they were marching to the front looked as Russian soldiers always look; like "God's poor little grey cattle." The army was, as it has long been, a resigned, obedient, amorphous human mass put into motion by other people towards some unknown destination, moving in blind faith towards an unknown destiny and for an unknown purpose. There was no fighting spirit, no feeling of duty, nor indeed any feeling of spiritual exaltation whatsoever. There was, once more, obedience and nothing else.

But there was one thing during this early period of the war which made the mobilisation very remarkable, indeed almost historic. For the first time in history there seemed to be a real point of contact between the army and the people. For the first time, the Russian troops were really heartily welcomed and cheered by the people. Hitherto there was only pity for the individual soldier and fear and hatred of the army as a whole. Now, for the first time, fear and hatred were

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replaced by sympathy and love. The cheers of the people and the welcome they received must have been a revelation to the soldiers—must indeed have warmed their hearts with a sudden glow of unexpected happiness. They must have felt that all they had been taught in the barracks by the officers about the “internal enemy” was a lie. This sympathy of the people was in striking contradiction to the legend about the “internal enemy,” and it opened the eyes of the soldiers. It is quite possible that from this time the fermentation in the army actually began. At any rate, the soldiers went to the front with this rare experience of popular sympathy and love fresh in their memory. Later on the soldiers were to receive many more tokens of the people’s sympathies; their distrust of the officers, who always tried to alienate them from the people, must have grown rapidly.

I well remember the favourable impression produced in Russia by Kitchener’s and King George’s orders of the day to the British Expeditionary Forces when they left for France. The British were reminded in these orders that upon their behaviour in France, and upon their respect for French civilian life and property, the good name of Britain would depend. Russian progressives admired and envied the noble and dignified advice given to British soldiers. But they knew only too well that Russian fighting traditions and the mentality of the Russian military leaders and of the Government were of quite a different nature. They feared that Russian Generals would never consent to restrict the soldier where “those insignificant interests of the civil population” were concerned. And the fears of Russian progressive society were confirmed only too soon. Not only was the army not restricted; it was expressly allowed “full freedom of movement and action” during the campaign. In fact, full licence was given to the soldiers, not only in enemy countries, but even in the Western provinces of Russia, which the army had to cross on their way to the front. This free-

dom of movement and action was considered a good tonic for the coming battle.

I am telling this abominable and terrible chapter of Russian realities very reluctantly. But I ought not to pass it over in silence, for two reasons. Firstly, because I ought not, nor do I desire, to be silent about any unpleasant truths; and secondly, because I am deeply convinced that this licence which was given to the soldiers, and actually encouraged by the military authorities, had a very bad effect on the morale of the army and bore terrible fruit at a later stage.

The poisonous atmosphere which was created at the front by the Military Party, and which was known in Russia as the Nicholas-Yanushkevich régime, was chiefly responsible for the shaken morale of the people and of the army. It was here that the shaken morale of the army had its origin.

There is not the slightest doubt that never since 1861, when the liberation of the serfs by Alexander II. had for a short time created an atmosphere of reconciliation, had there been such a favourable moment in Russia's history as in this first month of the war. The definite break with reactionary Germany and the alliance of Russia with free and liberal England in defence of the same cause—all this made Russians feel and believe that a new epoch had arrived.

It was a proud and happy—but, alas—a very short period of Russian history. Nobody preached, nobody even talked of reconciliation. And yet the relations between the Government and the people, and between the many races, nationalities, classes and creeds of Russia, were never more cordial and friendly. The people fraternised with the soldiers; progressive newspapers and leaders of the political opposition parties praised and blessed the Government. Inveterate anti-Semites fraternised with the Jews, and Jews marched in procession, singing the Russian National Anthem and bearing Russian National flags. The "Novoie Vremia" praised the loyalty of the Finns, and the Finns



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fraternised with the Russian soldiers. I, myself, travelled from Sweden through Finland immediately the war broke out, and the impression was simply marvellous. I have known Finland and the cold and placid Finns for many years; and the change I saw seemed like something which could happen only in fairy tales.

In Petrograd the people sang the Russian National Anthem and cheered the Government and the Tsar with no less enthusiasm than the Germans in Berlin sang "Die Wacht am Rhein" and shouted "Hoch!" for the Kaiser. In fact, a more favourable atmosphere for the successful prosecution of the war could not be imagined. But it was destroyed only too soon by the rude and overbearing behaviour of the ambitious Military Party. The Military Party went to war, not only to conquer the enemy, but to conquer Russia itself. Even victory over Germany was, for them, only a means of establishing more firmly their own power in Russia. The Military Party, the Grand Dukes, the War Office, the General Staff, and the Court camarilla refused to accept the change which had come over Russia. Their mentality prevented them from understanding the people's loyalty and from believing in it. They could only believe in loyalty achieved by military means; they could only trust enforced loyalty.

The Finns are loyal. Splendid! But a few more divisions stationed in Finland will strengthen the loyalty of the Finns. The Jews are proclaiming their patriotism. A very pleasant sign! But that is no reason why the military authorities should alter their long-established conviction that in the event of a war with Germany the Russian Jews will sympathise with the enemy more than with Russia. Therefore, loyalty or no loyalty, the Jews in the provinces behind the front must be treated as potential spies or at least as secret allies of the enemy.

Such was the poisonous mentality of the Military Party. Within a fortnight the golden opportunity



for reconciliation had passed by, and a few weeks later the public and political life of Russia was once more permeated with mutual hatred and mistrust. But it was in the army that the influence of this policy of the Military Party was most deplorable. The morale of the army was shaken even before it met the enemy.

It is, of course, easy to understand why the Press in this country and in France persisted in denying that the Russian army committed any atrocities. It certainly is more convenient for them to represent the "army of the Tsar" as a well-disciplined model army which chivalrously and gallantly fought the enemy, whereas the army of the Revolution degenerated into an undisciplined mob, looting and destroying everything that came its way. But whether we like it or no, it is a terrible fact that the army of the Tsar, or rather of the Grand Duke Nicholas, committed atrocities both in enemy lands and in Russia itself. The most abominable atrocities were committed by the High Command. It terrorised the people behind the front, arrested and banished the populations of whole villages, took hostages, and encouraged the soldiers to look upon the civilian population as spies and secret agents of the enemy. In the invaded provinces of Galicia and the Bukovina it violated all institutions of public life, shutting down the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) schools, suppressing the Ruthenian newspapers and religious societies, and arresting and banishing the Ruthenian priests. It replaced the free or half-free forms of political and social life by the most rotten institutions, the worst products of Russian political ingenuity.

The short régime of Count Bobrinski, who was appointed Military Governor of Galicia, was a terrible object lesson to the peoples of Austria, and indeed of Europe in general. Bobrinski brought over the very worst elements from Russia, the political blackguards recommended by the "Black Hundred." He made Lemberg into a kind of experimental laboratory of the

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worst possible "Black Hundred" methods.\* The soldiers, encouraged by the High Command, looked upon the unfortunate population of Western and South-Western Russia and of the occupied territory of Austria as legitimate booty; they looted the shops and violated the people. The facts shocked Russia. Russian society was disgusted and filled with shame. All the high ideals which Russian progressives had associated with the war were brutally violated. They had gone to war to free the peoples of Austria from the Hapsburg yoke, only to put them under the régime of the "Black Hundred"; and on the way the war with the Huns was being transformed into a continuous pogrom by the soldiers in the Western provinces of Russia. Thus there was no limit to the depression and humiliation of thoughtful Russians. But apart from their humiliation, they were alarmed above all on account of the inevitable influence of this state of affairs on the morale of the soldiers. It was poisoning the soul of the Russian soldiers; it was dangerously affecting the simple mind of the peasant soldier.\*\*

\* "Among the heaviest criminals of the old régime, it appears that we have hitherto forgotten one more gang of political marauders—those who, under the leadership of Count Bobrinski and Bishop Eulogiy, flocked to Galicia after our victorious army, robbing and oppressing the population who gave the Russian army a friendly welcome and who, thanks to their crimes, followed the retreating army with altogether different feelings. Every honest Russian has blushed with shame in reading of even that minute part of the exploits of that gang, which has found its way to the press through the obstacles of censorship."—"Den," March 21, 1917.

\*\* ". . . But the front is not a homogeneous domain. If the best youthful forces of the people are concentrated there—there are also entrenched the noxious breed of the old order, and it is hard to say whose part has been more fatal in the last three years; that of the outcasts of reaction in the rear or that of the outcasts of reaction at the front.

"For it is just at the front that a wild bacchanalia of pogroms and banishments, of wholesale slaughter and murder of peaceful and innocent inhabitants, took place. Acting from here, the high command filled the history of the last three years with the horrors of St. Bartholomew's Eve, of the inquisition and the crusades, which struck millions of Russian citizens dumb with horror."—"Den," Petrograd, March 15, 1917.

Every effort was made to stop this rot. Several influential public bodies—notably an unofficial Commission of the Duma, the Society of Journalists in Petrograd, and others—investigated the facts at the front. The immense material collected testified with unfailing clearness to the criminal origin of this policy and to its terrible influence upon the army. The Russian Press was powerless, being forbidden to report the facts. But there was a widespread hope that if the facts could be brought to the notice of the Western Allied Powers, they would use their influence with the Russian Government to bring about a change for the better. The most difficult question was how to get the material over the frontier. However, this was successfully done, and yet all efforts to induce the Press in the Allied countries to make a protest were in vain. The silence of the British Press at that time was the first blow to the great admiration of Russian progressive society for Great Britain and for its free Press. The belief of Russian progressive society that England was “*our ally*” was destroyed; they saw that in reality England was “*their ally*”—the ally of the Tsarist Government, on which the English Press continued to lavish its praise and flattery.

The effect of this policy of deliberate mistrust on the morale of the army was terrible. Indeed, imagine the state of mind of the poor uneducated Russian soldier, who is taught to believe that the population in the rear is permeated with spies and hidden enemies. This terrible legend must naturally have excited and terrorised the army. The more so, as it began to dawn on the soldiers that all their greatest heroism and sacrifices ultimately led to disaster, and that for some reason or other disaster always coincided with grave cases of treason in the army itself. But even the facts about treason in the army, real and serious as they were, would not have had such a terrible effect on the psychology and the morale of the army if it had not been prepared to believe that treason was everywhere. The grave and

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repeated cases of treason in the army, added to the atmosphere of mistrust against the civilian population which had deliberately been fostered by the High Command, were enough to upset the confidence of any fighting force. After the dreadful disaster in East Prussia and after the Miassoiedov affair, when many officers were shot for high treason, the army was tremendously excited. The soldiers became very suspicious, and began to explain every misfortune by treason. The lack of munitions, the absence of reinforcements, in fact any sign of disorganisation in the army—everything was explained in whispers as being due to high treason. There was indeed treason enough in many places, but the soldiers began to see it everywhere. Each man suspected his neighbour. The army was overwrought. It lived, as it were, in a nightmare from which there was no escape. While the advance was still going on this did not matter so much, but after the great and disastrous retreat from Galicia in 1915, the army began to fall to pieces.

I made up my mind to avoid in my account of the war and of the Revolution any reference to the psychology of the Russian people. Explanation by reference to the national psychology is always a very dubious and hazardous process. But perhaps I may be allowed the one exception of pointing out the extraordinary impulsiveness of the Russian people. It is not merely my private opinion; it is a generally recognised fact. The Russian character lacks the tenacity and stubbornness of the British race. Misfortune will always make the British soldier more obstinate and more stubborn. With the Russian it is not so. Success will increase his energy and efforts tenfold, but failure inevitably leads him to weariness and despair.

The light and frivolous treatment of the great Russian retreat by the Allied Press is fresh in our memories. The Grand Duke was the favourite of the Press, and was praised as the greatest strategist and tactician. The Russian newspaper experts also

attempted to conceal the extent of the catastrophe, but the people of Russia were not deceived. They knew only too well that the retreat from Galicia, the loss of Poland and the fall of the western fortresses were the greatest military disasters ever sustained by Russia.

The High Command made an attempt to mislead the Russian public and the Allies by explaining this disaster as a crisis in munitions and organisation. But it was a much larger and more serious crisis than that. It was a veritable revolution in the mentality of the Russian soldier. For the first time in his life, he began to think, to criticise and to judge for himself.

And the result was that the whole structure of the Russian army was shaken. The very foundations of discipline were lost. In the course of the war, the Russian soldier had more and more begun to distrust his officers; now he ceased to fear them. The Government could indeed replace the guns and munitions which were lost during the retreat. But never again was it able to inspire in the soldiers the confidence in their officers which they had lost. Frightfulness was tried again and again, but with results the reverse of those anticipated. The disintegration of the army had begun; nothing could arrest it.

There were many terrible checks after this crisis; there were many splendid victories. But the morale of the army was broken.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE PROCESS OF DISINTEGRATION

THE "patriotic" Press in this country and in France would like to shift the responsibility for the disintegration of the Russian army to the Revolution and the Revolutionary democracy. According to them, the disintegration of the army was the evil work of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates and of the "Committee System."

This interpretation of events has two obvious advantages for the Press and for their Russian correspondents. In the first place, it relieves them of responsibility for their two years of silence, during which time they concealed the truth about the real condition of the Russian army from the British public. Secondly, it helps them to discredit the hated Revolution. Having shown that the Revolution and the Socialist parties are guilty of the destruction of the Russian army, the "patriotic" Press can turn to the workers of Britain and France and say: "Look what the Socialists and Revolutionaries have done with the 'brave and gallant army of the Tsar'! Beware!"

But, however convenient it may be for the capitalist Press to blame the Revolution for the decomposition of the army, it is nevertheless a falsehood. The disintegration of the army began long before the Revolution, and the revolutionary democracy is by no means responsible for the process, which was already completed under the old régime. Fraternisation with the enemy, refusal to fight, mass desertions and panic-stricken flight before advancing Germans—these and other symptoms of disintegration in the army, for which the "patriotic" Press would blame the Revolution, the



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"revolutionary talkers," "German agents," and "Bolshevik treachery"—all these appeared in perfectly palpable forms long before the Revolution.

Take the desertions. The first news about the desertions in the Russian army which reached this country was sent by the correspondents in Russia shortly after the Revolution. And the explanation given suggested that the desertions were brought about by the extremists of the Revolution, who aroused dangerous illusions among the peasant soldiers, making them think that the division of the land was imminent. The uneducated soldiers (it was said), anxious to secure their share, dropped their rifles, deserted from their units and hastened back to their native villages.

I have no hesitation in saying that this explanation was not only misleading but untrue. It was equally false as to the facts about the desertions and as to the origin of desertion as a mass phenomenon. It was the first of a long series of grave and far-reaching misrepresentations. I see that Mr. Wilton, the Petrograd correspondent of the "Times," in his recently published book, admits that the desertions began to occur in the winter of 1916.\* At the time, Mr. Wilton was, of course, silent about these facts. Not only did he conceal them from the British public, but the whole gist and tenor of his dispatches was such as to exclude the possibility of even a guess or a suspicion that there was anything wrong with the Russian army. But after the Revolution, he, in common with the majority of British and French newspaper correspondents, asserted that the disintegration of the Russian army began with the Revolution and with the renowned "Order No. 1."

Mr. Wilton states that the desertions began to occur in the winter of 1916. As a matter of fact, they had already begun in the autumn of 1915, and by the winter

\* "During the winter 1916-1917, scurvy was very prevalent at the front. Desertions began to occur. Many companies were reduced by these causes to one-third of their normal strength."  
—"Russia's Agony," page 64.

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of 1916 they had grown to a disastrous magnitude. Early in 1916 there were so many deserters roaming about Russia that the military authorities paid money to anyone who would bring them back. The chief "catchers" were the notorious "*strazhniki*," the village guards; and the more zealous of them not only received money payments, but were rewarded with military crosses and medals, to the great indignation of the army. Deserters were often caught in villages very far from the front, and a whole system was elaborated for reinstating them in their units. There were collecting stations behind the lines where the "*strazhniki*" had to bring them, and from there whole train loads of deserters were despatched to the front.

The people in Russia nicknamed the deserters, with gentle humour, "*lictchiki*" or flying men. The majority of these flying men formed an utterly desperate and despondent class, which had no more desire or fear in life. They were indeed severely punished on their return to the army, but they had little fear of this punishment and were never likely to submit. They only waited for an opportunity to escape again. Officers have said that they never wanted to come near a train which was carrying back deserters to the front. The deserters drank home-made vodka which they got from the railway servants in exchange for their (army) boots, and they were wild and turbulent.

The actual number of such "flying men" is not known. Even the Russian General Staff never knew their real number. This is hardly surprising, considering that the General Staff did not even know the number of mobilised men.

When I was in Russia, I asked every officer I met about the character and extent of the desertions from the army before the Revolution. All evidence goes to prove that desertion was a mass phenomenon. Its beginning was remarkable, and had very little to do with any kind of insubordination or lack of discipline. It was the perfectly natural result of the great retreat

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from Galicia. During this catastrophic retreat, many divisions were dispersed in all directions; and often single soldiers or groups of soldiers found themselves many miles away from their units, and would naturally be left alone for some weeks before they rejoined. This was not desertion, but it could easily lead to desertion, and it was in fact the chief cause of the beginning of desertion on a large scale. On this occasion, desertion was unintentional, but later on it became intentional; and the longer the war went on, the more desertions there were and the more deliberate and malicious was their character. It is estimated that just before the Revolution there were about two million deserters in the country.

It is a fact that the Revolution was accompanied by a considerable increase in the number of desertions—probably because the soldiers thought that the war would now soon be over, and perhaps also under the stimulus of alleged land division. But it is equally a fact that the Revolution was very quickly aware of the danger. It began to stimulate a movement to induce the deserters to return, which at first was very successful. The deserters, who were of course unconditionally pardoned by the Provisional Government, came back in heaps. In many towns meetings of deserters were held, at which resolutions were passed, followed by an immediate return to the front. Only at a later stage, when the army became the object and centre of the struggle between the Revolution and the counter-Revolution—only then did the deserters refuse to join their units. Then began the hideous scenes in several towns of Russia, where “patriotic” units, notably of military cadets, organised virtual stalking expeditions to round up deserters, resulting in much bloodshed and passionate resentment.

Thus desertion from the front on a large scale, which, owing to the false silence of the correspondents, was not heard of in this country till after the Revolution, was a notorious evil in Russia long before that event.

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Now let us consider fraternisation. Fraternisation with the enemy also did not begin with the Revolution, nor was it specially typical of the Revolution. It certainly showed a great increase after the Revolution, but it was known all through the war. The simple Russian soldiers always attempted to fraternise with the enemy, and artillery officers could tell many stories of how such attempts at fraternisation were stopped by artillery fire. The Slav soldiers of the Austrian regiments especially responded to this tendency to fraternise. There is not the slightest doubt that the enormous number of Slav prisoners in Russia was largely due to fraternisation between the soldiers of the two armies.

Once more in this case, not a word was said about fraternisation before the Revolution, and after the Revolution the fraternisation was attributed to deliberate and malicious treachery on the part of the revolutionary extremists. But as a matter of fact the great increase of fraternisation in the first days of the Revolution was a spontaneous outburst of revolutionary enthusiasm in the soldiers at the front, and the revolutionary democracy at Petrograd certainly could not have influenced it. Only at a later stage did they try to influence it, some sections doing their best to mitigate it, while others encouraged it and tried to give it a definitely political impulse and purpose.

There is a notion, which has been diligently spread, that the idea of fraternisation was given to the soldiers by Lenin on his first return to Russia. But as a matter of fact fraternisation began immediately the news about the Revolution reached the front line trenches. In the first convention of soldiers and officers which took place in Minsk at the end of April, 1917, the delegates from the front line gave a very interesting description of how the fraternisation began and how it was carried out. It was unanimously recognised that it was a spontaneous movement on the part of the soldiers them-



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selves, who went out to meet the enemy in the "neutral zone"—first singly and then in larger and larger groups—conveying the news of the Revolution. Eventually they met in the trenches of the enemy or in their own trenches, and sometimes as many as 500 were present at single meetings.

When this spontaneous movement became known to the revolutionary democracy at home, it was at first received with unanimous approval and joy, but after a short period it divided them into two camps. The moderates were afraid that fraternisation would lead to disorganisation of the army; while the extremists, who were tremendously impressed by the unexpected impulse of the movement, overestimated its possibilities. For them fraternisation was "the way to peace." They saw in it "the revolutionary initiative of the masses, an awakening of the conscious intelligence and courage of the oppressed classes; in a word, one of the links in the chain leading up to the proletarian Revolution" of the world. Lenin wrote on the first of May: "Fraternisation has begun; let us help it!" But even the Bolsheviks emphasised the necessity of turning fraternisation into an active political weapon, and of taking precautions lest it should lead to strategical advantages for the enemy or to the decomposition of the army. In a manifesto to the troops entitled "How to Fraternise" the Bolsheviks said:—

"Fraternisation must not be transformed into a trap for the revolutionary soldiers on one side or the other. We are in favour of fraternisation of revolutionary soldiers on both sides in the name of the transformation of the Russian Revolution into the European Revolution, and in order to carry the spirit of the Russian Revolution into Germany and into the German trenches. We see in it the great beginning of a great deed. But we want this to be actually a fraternisation of revolutionaries and not a trap set by imperialists to catch revolutionaries. The soldier comrades at the front, weighing all the circumstances, will know how to avoid such traps

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and transform these fraternisations into a means of carrying the Revolution from Russia into Germany."

Meanwhile the Generals—Gurko, Brusiloff and others—gave orders to the artillery to shoot at sight any groups of soldiers who were seen to leave the trenches for fraternisation. In fact a large number were killed in this way, and there was a bitter conflict between the infantry and the artillery, the latter being less infected with the revolutionary impulse. But this was unable to stop the fraternisation. It came to an end only when the people realised that fraternisation and cessation of hostilities at the front were liberating large numbers of German troops for the Western front. They began to call it a separate truce, and they saw that it led to no positive results. It lost its ideal significance, and only then, being really discredited in the minds of the people, it died a natural death.

It is difficult at present to give a true estimate of the total results of fraternisation. Only the future historian will be able to estimate its true significance. But at the time *all* elements in Russia, including the Generals, who regarded it as unmitigated treason, realised that apart from its effects on the Russian army it had a very considerable positive effect in undermining the discipline and organisation of the German army. Early in May, the then Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies, General Alexeiev, said, in an interview which was published in all the Petrograd newspapers: "Without however shutting our eyes to the immense harm done by this practice of fraternisation, we cannot help coming to the conclusion that it has had a powerful effect on the ranks of the enemy, and that things are not all well with them." General Dragomirov, in an interview published in the "*Den*" of May 5th, said: "Undoubtedly fraternisation, while having a demoralising effect on our armies, is not without effect on the mood of the German soldier either." Kerenski himself, who referred to the fraternisation as a most deplorable practice which must be arrested at all



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costs, told me on the 1st of May that its effect on the front line of the enemy was so great that if they wished to undertake an offensive they would have to replace all their first line units by fresh troops.

Fraternisation was by no means instigated by the Revolution. It had existed before the Revolution; it certainly showed a great increase immediately after the Revolution, but then only as a spontaneous manifestation of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the Russian soldier. Even the refusal to fight and the panic-stricken rout before the advancing enemy were not unknown things in the days before the Revolution. It is true that in the Galician disaster last summer they assumed the most terrible proportions, but they were by no means an entirely new occurrence.

The Revolution is not, then, guilty of the decomposition of the Russian army. All the elements of decomposition were present before the Revolution; and its causes lay in the exhaustion of Russia. Nevertheless, future history will heavily censure the Revolution for not stopping the rot. The Revolution certainly should and could have stopped it. The new democracy of Russia had the true instinct, and the Soviet truly understood the great task of reorganising the Russian army. The inclusion of soldiers' representatives in the Soviet bears witness to its realisation that the strength of the new Russia must be based on unity between the workers and the soldiers. The much-discussed "Order No. 1," whether right or wrong in some details, clearly indicates that the Soviet realised the necessity of reorganising the army. The war had finally and definitely destroyed the army of Tsarist slaves. The "poor little grey cattle" ceased to exist; but there was a long way to go before the broken army of slaves could become a strong revolutionary army of the Republic. This could not be achieved by a miracle. It could only be brought about by a courageous and consistent realisation of the democratic programme of the Revolution. The new democracy of Russia should

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mercilessly have cleared the army of all reactionary elements. It was imperative to create an army permeated from top to bottom by unity of thought and revolutionary feeling. To achieve this end no price was too dear, and the revolutionary democracy ought if necessary to have sacrificed the majority of the reactionary generals and high officers. A smaller army with younger officers, but united in spirit and devoted to the ideas of the new Russia, would have been infinitely more effective than the huge and broken military machine permeated by mutual distrust. The so-called discipline of the old régime and the pre-revolutionary organisation of the army were not only useless but harmful. So long as these outworn and rotten elements were retained, they only prolonged the decomposition of the army.

The revolutionary democracy saw the danger perfectly clearly, but they had not sufficient courage and will-power to accomplish what was necessary. Many times they boldly attempted the great task of thoroughly reorganising the army. But the shoutings of the Russian and Allied Imperialists and reactionaries led them astray. Therein lay the weakness of the Revolution. *The revolutionary democracy had not courage enough to reorganise the army, and it compromised on this great question with the Imperialists and reactionaries. That was the greatest misfortune of Russia.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE ARMY AND THE REVOLUTION

THE army came out in support of the Revolution and went over to the side of the people. It was one of those impalpable miracles of history which are impossible to grasp and to estimate; any attempt to explain it rationally or on purely logical grounds is bound to fail. Whole books will be written on this marvellous conversion. Every detail in the life of the Russian soldiers will be told; the tragic story of their sufferings, of their cruel and incompetent commanders who led them to slaughter without adequate equipment, and of their continual betrayal by treason at the front and marauders at the rear. The story will be told of all their hopes and their despondencies; and the more we know about these terrible three years of war, the more we understand the life of the Russian soldier, the more clearly we shall realise how this regeneration came about, transforming in a flash the Russian soldiers, the slaves of the Tsar and of the land-owners, into the zealous supporters of the Revolution. But even then we shall not know the whole movement in the soul of the Russian soldiers during those few hours when their participation in the Revolution was decided.\*

\* Mr. Wilton evidently sees no difficulty in explaining how and why the soldiers joined the Revolution. After describing mutinies of the Guard Battalions at Petrograd "amid scenes of the greatest atrocity" and telling how the men of the Litovsky guards murdered their officers, Mr. Wilton says: "After satiating themselves with blood and slaughter, the Litovtzy poured out into the street. There they heard that the Duma had been closed. Here was a convenient means of justifying their crime. They had slain their 'oppressors.' It was all in defence of the people. Now they would rally round the Duma. 'To the Duma! To the Duma!' they cried. . ."—"Russia's Agony." Page 116.

I do not know whether such an explanation, which in style and character resembles a detective novel, will satisfy the English reader. In Russia such nonsense could not be found, even in the worst sheets of newspapers of the "Black Hundred."

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When in the historical February days the workers went out on the street, not only were they not sure that the soldiers were prepared to join them; they had very real grounds for the belief that a part at least of the garrison would obey their officers and give assistance to the police forces of Protopopov. But the miracle took place. The army, which was sent out to crush the people, went over to the people. On the first day the soldiers were not actually with the people, but already they were not against the people. The Nachalstvo still held sway over the will of the soldiers. There were some skirmishes between the workers and the soldiers. There were even killed and wounded on both sides. But a living sense of contact between the workers and soldiers was already beginning to be felt. The warm feeling of sympathy and fellow-feeling, whose seeds were sown in the early days of the war, was at last beginning to blossom forth. It came out at last, a living creative force of upheaval. And the last day of doubt and wavering in the hearts of the soldiers was the last day of the Autocracy in Russia. Next morning the soldiers poured out and melted together in one irresistible current with the revolutionary people. From that moment the Autocracy ceased to exist. Rodzianko, Guchkov, and the other "partisans of reform were still hoping to checkmate the forces of revolution."\* They continued to send S.O.S. messages to the Tsar imploring him to submit to reforms before it was too late. It was already too late. The Autocracy was founded on the division between the army and the people, and on that alone. As soon as the hostility and distrust of the people, which the Autocracy had been instilling into the army for decades past, was broken down, the Autocracy had no place in Russia. The autocratic feudal régime, which was always preaching the "union sacrée" of Russia, could not survive 24 hours of the real union of the people.

Unfortunately, however, this marvellous union

\* Mr. Wilton, "Russia's Agony." Page 129.

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between the soldiers and the people, which made the Revolution such an absolute success, was at once a hint to point out the way for counter-revolution. If only this union could be destroyed, if only the confidence between the soldiers and the people could be undermined, there was hope for a counter-revolution. Unfortunately the condition of the Russian army nourished the illusion that this was possible. I refer to the fact that it was *not the army as a whole*, but only the *soldiers*, who joined the Revolution. The cleavage and the sense of mutual distrust between the soldiers and their officers had been the most tragic fact in old autocratic Russia. And this cleavage was destined to destroy the greatest hopes of the Revolution.

Generally speaking, when in a Revolution the army is said to have gone over to the side of the people, it is understood to mean that the officers went over, either inspiring or simply leading the soldiers after them. Such was the famous attempt at revolution by the *Decembrists* under Nicholas I., when a group of the most enlightened idealists among the Russian officers tried to lead the soldiers to revolt. And it was generally held in Russian revolutionary circles that, though the soldiers might mutiny, such a mutiny of soldiers without the co-operation of their officers could never be transformed into a Revolution. During their long years of dogged and stubborn preparation, the Russian revolutionists carried out an incessant and unflinching propaganda among the soldiers. But they considered that for the success of the Revolution it was necessary to get the support of the officers. This accounts for the pessimism which was so frequently prevalent in Russian revolutionary circles. They saw the difficulty of relying on the officers in case of revolution. And, indeed, the Russian Revolution was the first revolution ever to be achieved by the soldiers going over to the people not only without the co-operation of the officers, but actually against their will. The Revolution was a soldier's revolution. It was a revolution of the workers,



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peasants and soldiers. The workers were struggling for political and industrial freedom; the peasants realised in the Revolution their age-long struggle for land. The soldiers rose in revolt against all the cruelty and degradation of barrack life and discipline. They had their own revolution, running parallel with the revolution of the people. Thus it was that the Russian Revolution brought about a definite and complete break between the soldiers and their officers.

It is true that, as soon as the Revolution triumphed, all the officers, from the high Generals to the lowest ranks, recognised the accomplished fact, expressed more or less boisterous delight, and took the oath to the new régime. But the wholesale transition of the officers was a grave misfortune for Russia and for the Russian army. Had the inveterate reactionaries and monarchists among the officers abdicated or been deposed along with the Autocracy, there might have been some hope for the regeneration of the army. But all the reactionary Generals and staffs were left in their places. The Revolution was a failure so far as the army was concerned. It did not eliminate the element of distrust. The old hatred between the officers and the soldiers, the hatred which had undermined the army of the Tsar, was preserved in the army of the Revolution, and was bound to undermine it also. And when the officers, especially the high officers, did join the Revolution, they did so in many cases under such monstrous circumstances that it only served to deepen the cleavage between them and the soldiers by sowing the seeds of further hatred and mistrust. Thus in one town the soldiers brought the high officers of the garrison into an open square and ordered them to take the oath under threat of machine gun fire. The incident would probably have ended in bloodshed but for the intervention of the local Soviet.

The officers in the rear adapted themselves more quickly to the new situation, and in fact many of the reactionary Generals were turned out. But the Generals at the front were more rigid and less pliable. Their



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attitude was unsympathetic and chilly—in some cases even openly hostile to the Revolution. They proclaimed their loyalty to the new régime, but began to collect reactionary elements round them at the front. The front became a refuge for reactionary officers who had fled from the Revolution. Even the attitude of the “Stavka” or General Headquarters was doubtful and suspicious. General Alexeiev threatened court-martial on all revolutionary “gangs” who were found disarming the railway gendarmes.\* In an order of the day, General Rad’ko-Dmitriev, another of the commanders-in-chief, threatened court-martial for refusals to salute. General Evert, of the same rank, actually defied the Provisional Government, and continued to recognise the Grand Duke Nicholas as the head of the army, appealing to the troops to support the Romanovs.

On the very next day after the Revolution, when the revolutionary forces were just beginning their new organisation, there was a conflict between the “parties of order” and the revolutionary democracy, which illumined in a flash the necessity for settling the status of the soldier and the constitution of the army decisively and at once. The situation was exceedingly difficult. The soldiers had left their barracks and joined the Revolution, their leaders in most cases being private soldiers themselves. The majority of the officers lay low, but in some regiments they gained the upper hand and tried to disarm the soldiers. It was a very uncertain and dangerous position. The soldiers were in a state of anxiety and tension. They had not the confidence to

\* Alexeiev’s Order of the Day of March 3 is very characteristic of the inability or unwillingness of the Generals to understand the new position. This Order was issued when the very necessary business of disarming the police of the old régime was in full swing. After referring to the “purely revolutionary gangs” from Petrograd who were disarming the railway gendarmes, the Order concludes: “. . . Wherever such self-appointed delegations make their appearance, they are not to be dispersed, but taken prisoner and court-martialled if possible on the spot, and the decision of the court is to be executed at once. . . 3rd March, 1917. No. 192. Alexeiev.”

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return to the barracks; at length they collected round the Duma, where the Soviet had established their headquarters. Thereupon Rodzianko, acting in the name of the Provisional Committee of the Duma (the Provisional Government was not yet formed), and without consulting the leaders of the democracy, made his very inopportune appeal to the soldiers, simply exhorting them to have confidence in their officers, to remain faithful to them, and to return to their barracks. Great indignation was aroused by this exhortation, which was, to say the least of it, suspicious.

This appeal of Rodzianko's was coincident with the first meeting of the representatives of the garrison with the Soviet of Workers' Delegates, which had been formed on the day before. The soldiers' delegates had brought with them the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty which was inherent in the soldiers' position. Their first demand was that the rights of the soldiers must be guaranteed by the Revolution. They would not return unconditionally to the barracks and to the authority of the officers. They demanded a clear definition of their status. It was at this meeting that they first uttered the words "*pravà soldata*"—the soldier's right—which played so great a part in the later conflicts of the Revolution. The appeal of the Duma Committee was discussed and repudiated with indignation. It must be remembered that this appeal was made at a time when even the deposition of the Tsar had not yet taken place. Rodzianko exhorted the soldiers to return to their officers, who had not yet been relieved of their allegiance to the Tsar, and had shown little inclination to discard it themselves. It was decided to counteract Rodzianko's appeal at once. The first meeting of the soldiers' delegates with the Soviet thus became the originator and collective author of the famous Order No. 1. This order was a definite move to establish the position of the soldier and his independence and citizenship. It called upon naval and military units of all kinds to elect soldiers' committees.

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It forbade the soldiers to give up their arms to the officers, even if they should demand it. It put the soldiers in their political activities under the authority of the Soviet, and freed them from all limitations and humiliations in their political, civil and private life; nevertheless, it expressly commanded that "*in the ranks and in carrying out their military duties, the soldiers must observe the strictest military discipline.*" For the rest, it abolished the salute and the use of titles, and forbade the use of rude language and overbearing conduct on the part of the officers (e.g., the use of "thou" in a contemptuous sense).

The remnants of the "Black Hundred Press" and, following in their train, the majority of the foreign correspondents, have furiously attacked the revolutionary democracy for this Order No. 1, and tried to represent it as the origin of all Russia's misfortunes.\* They

\* Of course, it is quite comprehensible that the authorship of this Order was attributed to a Jew named Nehamkes. The following document, quoted from the "Izvestia" of March 2, shows, however, that the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison were themselves the originators and authors of the much disputed Order No. 1:

"Extract from the minute of the sitting of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates on March 1:—

"Considerable agitation is caused by the conduct of the Provisional Committee of the State Duma in relation to the Petrograd garrison. Delegates are arriving of those units which have already organised the elections for the Soviet. It is decided to continue the sitting uninterruptedly.

"It is decided to devote the sitting to the deliberation of the following questions:—

"(1) The relations of the soldiers to officers who return to barracks.

"(2) The question of giving up arms.

"(3) The question of the Military Commission and of the definition of its scope and powers.

"On all these questions only the representatives of the garrison have the right to speak. (Italics are mine.)

"Representatives of the following units took part in the discussions: The Yeger Guards, the Litovski Guards, the Aviation units, the Preobrajenski Guards, the Semionovski Guards, and many other units.

"It was decided to approach the garrison with the following appeal: Not to give up arms. To elect company and battalion

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accuse it of undermining the discipline and confidence of the army. In reality it had precisely the opposite effect. It had an immediate quieting effect, and put an end to excesses on both sides. It restored some measure of confidence at a moment when confidence was entirely lacking.

From the very first hours of the Revolution, the revolutionary democracy were anxiously concerned with the task of preserving the fighting fitness of the army. Their first thought was to stop the process of disintegration in the army. Notwithstanding this fact, the slanderers of the Revolution, both in Russia and in the Allied countries, have hissed and hooted at the revolutionary democracy, blaming them for the decomposition of the army. They began this slanderous misrepresentation in the first hours of the Revolution, and have continued it to this day. In their hatred they have not hesitated to accuse the revolutionary democracy—the really best men among the Russian workers and thinkers, whose devotedness to the people was proved by many years of suffering and persecution—of being mere servants and hirelings of German militarism and German autocracy. They have made the meanest insinuations to the effect that the leaders of the democracy were in German pay. Even to-day, when nothing is left of all these calumnies and slanders, when they are no longer believed in by any honest man in Russia, and no honest Russian would repeat them, there are still people in this country and in France who unashamedly give these calumnies out for the truth. I decline, as any Russian would decline, to make these things a subject of polemics. They are too mean. But one thing I would say : let those people be ashamed who, while professing their love of Russia, yet have a malicious joy in affirming and disseminating every kind of base calumny against Russia.

committees to manage all the internal affairs of the regiments. To organise the soldiers in the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates. To obey the commands of the Military Commission only in so far as they do not clash with the decisions of the Soviet of Workers' Delegates. To appoint on the Military Commission representatives of the soldiers "



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The conflicts and excesses between the soldiers and officers in Petrograd, and still more the grave tension between the High Command and the army at the front, made it quite obvious in the very first weeks of the Revolution that a simple return to the old discipline was impossible. The cleavage, and the distrust of the officers on the part of the soldiers, had gone too far. The policy which was recommended by the Provisional Committee of the Duma (Rodzianko's manifesto) was out of the question. Had it been followed, it would inevitably have led to absolute chaos and dissolution. It was obvious that, if anything could save the army and hold it together, it was the creation of a new authority in the place of the old "nachalstvo." *Russia had to have either a democratic army or no army at all.*

But the democratisation of the army, necessary as it was, was bitterly and relentlessly opposed by the united Moderate, Liberal and reactionary counter-revolutionary elements. They based their contentions mainly on the argument that a democratic army is impossible because the art of war demands great skill and expert knowledge on the part of the leaders. They drew sarcastic pictures of the strategy of elected committees of uneducated soldiers, or of bluejackets commanding warships, and so forth. But that was not the point. The Committees and Soviets never made the slightest pretence of interfering with the expert business of the General Staffs and of the officers. There was not a single resolution, not one article in the Socialist Press, which even suggested such a thing; and the opponents who raised such a storm of alarm and poured out such biting sarcasm were perfectly well aware of this fact. No : the democratisation of the army was not dangerous because the soldiers wanted to intervene in strategical questions. It was dangerous because a democratic army would inevitably intervene in political questions. Democratisation of the army was dangerous because it was bound to lead to democratisation of the war and of foreign policy. It was dangerous because it would



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remove the army from under the sway of the ruling classes. The propertied classes were so much alarmed at these dangers which they saw in the proposed democratisation of the army, that they left no stone unturned in their desperate efforts to prevent it. An appalling contradiction arose. The army was actually falling to pieces; it was losing all form and structure, and degenerating into an amorphous and sprawling mass. And the only remedy which could save the army, weld it together, imbue it with new life and give it form and stability—the thorough and consistent democratisation of the army—was not to be carried out. The chief enemies of democratisation were precisely those people who shouted loudest about the need of preserving the “fighting fitness” of the army. The alternatives were, as I have said, *a democratic army or no army at all*. The revolutionary democracy were heart and soul for democratisation; their opponents preferred to see the army fall to pieces before their eyes rather than consent to its regeneration on democratic lines.

## Part IV: The Revolution



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE PEOPLE

THE suppression of the 1905 Revolution was followed by a period of the darkest reaction in Russia. The reaction, which followed immediately after the prorogation of the second Duma and Stolypin's *coup d'état*, had a curious and very sinister feature. Unlike the traditional reactionary policy of Russia, which contented itself with a series of brutal and clumsy persecutions of all revolutionary activities—with banishments, executions, imprisonments, and other tortures—this new reaction was marked by a series of *reforms* aiming at a systematic strengthening of all counter-revolutionary forces. The greatest energy and determination were put into the agrarian reforms, whose central purpose was to increase the class of small landowners in the villages. By this means it was hoped to frustrate the growth of the revolutionary movement, which had always been bound up with the struggle for land—either arising out of it, or developing into it. The traditional revolutionary ideals of Russia were expressed in the famous battle-cry "land and freedom"; the more modern Socialist and revolutionary ideas only reversed the order, crying "freedom and land."

The period between 1907 and 1911 was the darkest and most critical time in Russia's history. It was however a period of remarkable prosperity in the economic sense. And from 1912 onwards a gradual decline of this feeling of social depression became manifest. Notably the Labour movement, which had been crushed out by the cruel hand of Stolypin, began to show some signs of returning life. Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies were making visible progress. The fourth Duma once more contained a

group of Socialist deputies representing the workers and the peasants. Once more an open Labour Press appeared. The potential strength of the Labour forces at this time may be judged from the difficulty experienced by the Government in suppressing the Labour newspapers. They were suppressed and reappeared again and again. Collections for them were openly made in the factories. 1913 was undoubtedly a year of considerable political vigour and boldness. 1914 was a year of great hopes on the one hand and of grave anxiety on the other. Unrest was growing and was assuming an openly political and revolutionary character. Under pressure from the left, Russian Liberalism also was evincing more boldness in its attitude to the Government.

This social unrest and awakening coincided with the increasingly aggressive attitude of the militarists. Their sabre-rattling began to grow more rowdy. The War Office inspired articles in the Press and threw down the gauntlet to some unknown foe in an inspired article, "We are ready!" More space began to be devoted in the newspapers to questions of war and war-preparedness; some newspapers began to have permanent columns reserved for military affairs. The atmosphere of war was in fact diligently created many months before the war broke out. Here in the countries of the Entente it has generally been considered an established fact that the Russian Government took all possible measures to preserve peace. Only since Sukhomlinov's trial, on his evidence and that of Yanushkevich, the public in the Entente countries has discovered that the Russian war-party had its share of responsibility for the outbreak of the war. On the narrow technical question of "Who mobilised first?" which has always been the bone of contention between the diplomacies of the Entente and the Central Empires, I may add that for the Russian people there never was any question about it, that this time at any rate Russia had not been left behind. In the first days of the war,



the public were beaming with delight, and seeing the rapidity of the mobilisation they rubbed their hands and said: "Well done! At last, for once in a way, we did not let ourselves be fooled!" Yanushkevich and Sukhomlinov said in their trial that the Tsar afterwards thanked them for not obeying his orders to postpone the mobilisation. They were too modest. They might with equal justification have said that "all Russia" thanked them.

The whole aspect of Russia in 1914, and especially the attitude of the militarists, goes to prove that the Government was looking for war. This is confirmed by certain documents which have lately been published. Baron Rosen, one of the prominent Russian diplomats (former Ambassador in Washington and in Tokio), who in the last years before the war was back in Russia as a member of the Council of the Empire, has affirmed\* that the Government was actually trying to engineer a war in order to drown the growing ferment of revolution in a flood of war enthusiasm. But even though it were not proved that the Government was looking for war, the Government was certainly not looking for peace. If it had no share in the conflict which was instigated by the Austro-German diplomacy, at any rate it cannot be doubted that in July, 1914, the Russian Government could not help regarding this conflict as a happy chance of turning the tide from questions of internal policy to external passions. It is a fact that July, 1914, was the most revolutionary month since the suppression of the Revolution in 1905. The arrival of Poincaré in Petrograd a few days before war broke out coincided with labour unrest and strikes which exceeded anything that had taken place since Stolypin's *coup d'état*. No doubt the strike and the revolutionary excitement in Petrograd (there were actually barricades erected in the labour quarters of the town) were duly estimated in Potsdam, and together with the Irish

\* In an interview with Mr. Philip Price, Petrograd correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*.

crisis they no doubt constituted a new argument for the German war party. But it is equally true that this revolutionary excitement stimulated the war-spirit at Tsarskoe Selo and strengthened the Russian war party no less. And from their point of view they were making no mistake. No sooner had the war-fever begun, than the threatening spirit of revolution subsided. All currents of thought melted into one boundless enthusiasm.

The war enthusiasm which has been manifested throughout the world during the last four years is a deeply interesting social phenomenon. The most striking thing is the fact that this war enthusiasm was universal, and appeared in the same form and to the same degree in the different countries. The war enthusiasm in Belgium and in this country is easy to understand. It was in one case the enthusiasm of a violated nation which was out in defence of its very life; in the other case a noble feeling for the defence of a small and heroic nation. But how is one to explain the war enthusiasm in a country like Roumania, which entered the war after two years of haggling and bartering with both camps? How is one to explain the war enthusiasm in Bulgaria which, in alliance with Turkey, was going to fight against Russia, its traditional liberator from the oppression of the Turks? Yet all observers are agreed that the enthusiasm was tremendous, even in Roumania and Bulgaria, and that it was of the same kind as in the other belligerent countries.

What then was this enthusiasm? Whence did it come? No doubt the chief element in this universal enthusiasm for war is to be explained by purely elementary fighting instincts and crowd psychology. But, apart from this general human or rather animal element, it had a great cause in the discontent of the world. The years before the war were a critical epoch not only in Russia but everywhere. Something was ripening, as it were; something had to happen in the world. We were approaching a point of transition.

And the war came in to break the strain; all the accumulated tension found an outlet.

Let it be granted that in the case of other countries this interpretation of the prevailing war enthusiasm is merely speculative. At any rate, in Russia there is no doubt that the war was a presentiment of great things to come. The people set out to war, yet it was not victory but a free life which loomed large in their eyes. They had a very hazy conception of the way in which this would come about; but the desire, the ideal, was undoubtedly present. To the Russian people, Germany represented the bulwark of reaction, and the Russian Autocracy was continually drawing fresh power from its adherence to the German Court. More than once the Russian reaction brandished over the heads of the revolutionaries the threat of Kaiserism and its legions. The war against Germany was thus a war against reaction, against the source of reaction. It was revolution by means of war. That accounts for the war enthusiasm of the Russian people.

But this first war enthusiasm was very short-lived. The war against the sources of reaction unexpectedly strengthened the reaction in Russia. So also the hopes that the alliance with the free Western democracies would help to bring about a Liberal era in Russia were disappointed. The war strengthened reaction in all countries, but nowhere so much as in Russia. The very heights of reaction were reached in Russia during the early stages of the war. The greater the efforts of the armies, the more glorious their victories, the more powerful became the reaction and the more ruthless the suppression of the people. The first great military disaster in East Prussia led to a short wavering in the attitude of the reaction; but the steady advance of the armies into Galicia, their great successes in the Carpathians and the fall of Lemberg and Przemyśl, once more gave the Government the necessary prestige and moral force to oppress the people. Only after defeat in Galicia was the Government really shaken, and forced

to climb down and to adopt a more reasonable tone in its attitude to the people. The mutual interdependence between victory and reaction on the one hand, and defeat and Liberalism on the other, was only too clearly demonstrated during the first two years of war. This might well be expected to lead to defeatism, as it did in the Russo-Japanese war. But it is a most remarkable fact that defeatism never did appear in Russian progressive society during this war. There has been much talk about defeatism lately, and people have tried to accuse progressive Russia of being defeatist. Some publicists have not hesitated to represent Maxim Gorky as the head of the defeatist movement. But, as a matter of fact, there was no defeatist movement in Russia.\* Neither Maxim Gorky nor any other progressive Russian was defeatist—for the simple reason that the defeat of Russia would mean a victory of Germany and would thus strengthen the very source of Russian reaction. What was growing was not defeatism but the revolutionary spirit. *It was becoming more and more evident that the Russian Government must be defeated, not by the enemy armies, but by the Russian people itself.* Honest observers mistook this revolutionary feeling for defeatism, and dishonest reporters deliberately misrepresented it as such.

This revolutionary spirit began down below among the workers. It grew and grew, taking hold of greater and greater parts of the population and rising higher and higher in the social scale. The spirit of revolution became so great and powerful that the more observant members of the propertied and ruling classes began to urge the Government to make reforms. The famous programme of the progressive block of the Duma and of the Council of the Empire was the outcome of this foreboding of the inevitable Revolution. At length only one question remained: revolution must come—was it possible to achieve it during the war? The people were

\* A kind of defeatism existed only in the "Black Hundred." See the next chapter.

reluctant, being afraid lest they might endanger both the State and the success of the Revolution by attempting revolution during the war. But their sufferings increased beyond measure, and at last they had no alternative. The Government provoked the Revolution.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE GOVERNMENT

**A**T first the war evoked an unusually proud and high-spirited feeling in Russia. It was a period of great moral elevation. A series of altruistic acts on the part of the Russian Government gratified the national vanity. The abolition of alcohol was not only felt as a pleasing moral victory; it also roused great hopes for the future. Vodka had always been the most devoted ally of the reaction in Russia. By means of vodka the people were kept in darkness and ignorance. All their sense of human worth and self-respect was drowned in vodka. In short, vodka was the chain of Russia's slavery. And while Russia was making this great cultural step forward, the bankruptcy of German Kultur made the Russian people all the more proud. While Germany was grinding Belgium underfoot, Russia was declaring the freedom of Poland and issuing manifestoes to the oppressed peoples of Austria, bringing them the glad message that Russia's armies were hastening to their rescue. Then Russia began the successful dash into East Prussia to save France. All this was really sufficient ground for pride and satisfaction. Thus there began a period of self-praise and self-admiration.

People went about in a mood of exaltation, carrying flags, cheering and expressing their joy. The Government was delighted, thinking that at last the Tsar and his people were to be welded together for ever. To celebrate this "union of the Tsar with his people" even the national flag was altered. A combination of the yellow Tsar's standard with the national tricolour represented the new reconciliation of Russia. Patriots began to wear small enamelled emblems of this unity in their buttonholes.

This idyllic beginning was a little shaken by the sudden and abrupt dissolution of the Duma. The Duma was so irreproachably loyal and patriotic that simple people could not understand why the Government did not want to co-operate with the people through the Duma. But this incident did not make a very serious breach at the moment. Russia was victorious; the armies were advancing; why worry the Government with such trifles? However, by and by, a kind of uneasiness began to steal in. Dark and undefined rumours began to get about, to the effect that all was not well in and about the army. It was said that there were too many German generals in the army. The famous generals with German names who had distinguished themselves in the suppression of the 1905 Revolution might not be equally reliable in the present war. Some of the rumours were obviously fantastic—for instance, persistent stories, giving names and the details of the alleged occurrences, stated that the Grand Duke Nicholas, as Commander-in-Chief, was in the habit of boxing the ears of some of his Generals. And the remarkable thing is that people were inclined to believe this and equally absurd reports.

Then suddenly the storm broke. The defeat of the Russian armies in East Prussia revealed in a flash the corruption of the Government, the incompetence of the High Command, and the tragic inefficiency in the equipment of the army. It was the end of the idyll. The Government and the Court saw the spectre of defeat before them and shuddered.

The first to express misgivings were the "Black Hundred." They were the first to understand that all this popular enthusiasm for the war, followed by the abolition of vodka, the suspiciously democratic proclamation to the Poles and the far-reaching undertakings in Austria, would not lead to anything good. Altogether, this war was not to their taste. Suppose we crush Germany—terrible thought!—Wilhelm was always the great protector of our Autocracy. Germany is the only

Christian country in Europe where the people have any decent respect for law and order and discipline! If the Allies crush Germany, it will lead to revolution in Germany—which God forbid—and then how long can the Autocracy hold out in Russia?

The "Black Hundred" reactionaries in Russia were certainly not averse to a victorious war. They would have welcomed any war which aimed at the conquest of "Tsargrad" (Constantinople) and the erection of the Holy Cross on St. Sophia. But what they could not abide was a war which led to the defeat of Germany—especially if it was a defeat of the German military autocracy at the hands of the Western democracies. The case of progressive society and the revolutionaries was just the opposite. They certainly had ample reason for misgivings at the prospect of a victorious and triumphant Tsarism. But their enthusiasm for a defeat of German militarism, which they regarded as the bulwark of reaction in Eastern Europe, was sufficient to outweigh such misgivings. Their fear of the consequences of a Tsarist victory was outweighed by their confidence in the results of a victory by the Western democracies. Thus we see that while progressive society advanced towards immediate revolutionism, the "Black Hundred" became more and more definite in their pro-Germanism. And the "Black Hundred" openly proclaimed their point of view in their newspapers, which were patronised and subsidised by the Government.

The chief organ of the "Black Hundreds," the "Russkoe Znamia" (The Banner of Russia), was so cynical and so unabashed in its defeatism that it was ever afterwards referred to in the progressive Russian Press as the "Prusskoe Znamia" (The Banner of Prussia). The "Rech," the organ of the Cadets, made a speciality of exposing the anti-national doctrines of the "Prusskoe Znamia," and it is significant that the "Black Hundred" organisations did not sue the "Rech" for libel, nor did the Government prosecute

or suppress the "Black Hundred" papers. The other "Black Hundred" papers inclined towards the same point of view, but expressed it a little more mildly.

But the "Black Hundreds" were not content with merely expressing defeatist sympathies, or with propagating and spreading their views; they were themselves *acting* as defeatists. For instance, their share in the notorious Miassoiedov affair is undoubted. Not only were all the chief accomplices in this treachery influential members of "Black Hundred" organisations; but the whole spirit of "Miassoiedovism" was permeated with the defeatist ideology of the "Black Hundreds." It is a great misfortune that the Miassoiedov affair was never cleared up in its details. It was decided by a court-martial at the front, and thus the whole tragic reality of the business was hushed up and never came to light. This much, at any rate, is certain: Miassoiedov and his chief associates were intimate friends of the Minister for War and the Minister for the Interior, and they based their defence on the "Black Hundred" contention that the crushing of Germany would be more disastrous for Russia than the defeat of the Russian armies in the field.

They hinted that very influential members of the Government and high personages at the Court were in sympathy with their views; and they considered that they were fulfilling a very necessary function by helping the German armies. This was their defence. The traitors were executed, it is true, but the Government never made any attempt to investigate, to clear up or to refute the very grave allegations which the traitors made against members of the Government and the Court. Miassoiedov announced that the money they received from the Germans for their treacheries had been handed on to the "Black Hundred" organisations. But even this was never investigated.

The doubts which were sown in people's minds by this affair were accentuated by the fact that the conduct of General Rennenkampf, whose incompetence or suspicious behaviour was considered as the chief cause of

the disaster in East Prussia, was never investigated. People had a fixed idea that Rennenkampf was in collusion with the Germans, and yet nothing was done by the Government. Rennenkampf's name was simply dropped from the official reports, and no more was heard of him. This naturally gave rise to the suspicion that some high personage might be shielding him.

The Court and the militarists, who had started out on a victorious war as a means of preventing revolution, began to see that the war, if unsuccessful, might have just the opposite effect. And from that moment they lived in a perpetual dread of revolution, and their one thought was of how to prevent it. Their anxiety increased as the war went on, for they saw that the war was spending their best and most trusted forces. The enormous casualties in the Imperial Guards and other ultra-loyal units during the heroic offensive in East Prussia were realised as a severe blow to the potential strength of the Government in case of a rebellion. Those who were not killed in that offensive became inspired with a more real patriotism and permeated with hatred and indignation against the corrupt and inefficient Government. The Court began to look about for new sources of strength. Then began the game which became known in Russia as "political leap-frog": I refer to the feverish and repeated changes of Ministers, notably of Ministers of the Interior. Every adventurer who came to the Tsar with an elaborate scheme for checkmating the forces of revolution was received with open arms. The idea of crushing the coming Revolution by efficient police forces is generally attributed to Protopopov. It is true that Protopopov specially trained the police for the coming Revolution and equipped it with machine guns. But as a matter of fact all his predecessors during the war paid great attention to the police forces, and foresaw that in case of Revolution the police would have to take the place of the depleted Guards.

There is a very remarkable parallelism between the



attitude of the people towards the coming Revolution and that of the Government. At first the people had thought that the Revolution could be deferred till after the war. Only gradually and very reluctantly they came to the conclusion that the Revolution would have to take place during the war and in spite of it.

The Government went through an analogous transition in their thought. At first they thought that the Revolution would be killed by the war and swamped by war enthusiasm. But when threatening defeat opened the eyes of the Government to realities, they began to be terribly afraid of revolution. But they, too, expected that revolution would not take place till after the war. However, as the spirit of revolution grew stronger at the one pole and the defeatist mood gained ground at the other, the Government began to feel that the sooner the war was over, the more easily they could crush the Revolution. *Thus the Government, which had begun the war with the idea of avoiding the Revolution, came to the idea of making peace in order to prevent the Revolution.*

In this country and in France attempts have recently been made to deny that the Tsar's Government ever entertained the idea of a separate peace. I do not want to discuss the motives of this manœuvre, but I would only like to emphasise that this whitewashing of the Tsar's Government contradicts all the established facts. A separate peace was not concluded, not because the Government did not cherish the idea, but because it was afraid of the army and the people. As soon as the rumours of an intended separate peace became more definite, such an outcry was raised by the people and the army that the Government hastened to withdraw the idea in favour of a renewed outburst of warlike ardour. This is the origin of the periodical declarations of the Tsar and the Government about "war to the finish" and so forth.

The Government was in a dilemma. Then came Protopopov, and introduced his project for saving the

country from revolution. His programme was simple and ingenious. He argued : you cannot make peace at once because it will arouse universal indignation and make the revolutionary forces absolutely irresistible. You cannot wait till the end of the war, because you do not know how the war is going to end and whether the forces of revolution will not be stronger than ever. You must crush the revolutionary forces at once before it is too late. When you have done with the revolutionaries you are free to do what you like. You can then go on with the war, or you can stop it, at your pleasure. Protopopov was hailed by the Court and the " Black Hundreds " as a saviour. Never was a Minister more powerful. He was allowed to proceed with his project undisturbed, and he went straight to his goal. He increased the police forces of Petrograd, equipped them with machine guns taken from the army, made machine-gun emplacements on the roofs of the houses, trained the police for their task, and said " We are ready. "

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE CLASH

WHO made the Revolution, and how was the Revolution accomplished? One would imagine that nothing could be simpler than the answer to this question. All the phases of the Revolution were enacted quite openly; nay, more, all the preliminary stages, the events which led up to the Revolution, took place in the public view. The revolutionary spirit was growing visibly; revolution and counter-revolution were mustering their forces without making any secret about it.

And yet an absurd confusion has arisen, not only about the details of the Revolution, but even about its outstanding events. For instance, in this country it has become fashionable to consider that the Revolution was made by the Duma, and that the workers with their Soviets usurped the power which rightly belonged to Russian Liberalism. This idea has taken root so firmly in this country that anyone who says anything to the contrary is liable to be branded as an anarchist—even if he merely suggests that the workers played the chief part in the Revolution.

This attempt to represent the Duma as the author of the Revolution, though it is a sheer perversion of perfectly evident facts, is none the less comprehensible. For the question of who made the Revolution involves the question of what the Revolution stands for. Having accused the workers and soldiers of usurping the power which was won by the Duma, one can then declare that all the ideals of the Soviets were alien to the Revolution and not inherent in it. Then one can begin a "holy war" (*i.e.*, really counter-revolution), not in the name of counter-revolution, but in the name of the "real Revolution," defending it from the Soviets, the "anarchists" and "usurpers."

The first point of confusion is the question: Was the Revolution provoked by the Government? Those who adhere to the theory that the Duma created the Revolution affirm that "to imagine that he (Protopopov) 'provoked' the Revolution would be to accept a palpable absurdity."\* According to the majority of observers in Russia, the provocation of the Revolution was, however, to say the least of it, a palpable fact. It was deliberately organised many weeks in advance of the Revolution.

This is indicated by a whole series of Government measures—measures which were utterly senseless except on the assumption that they were deliberately intended to provoke revolt. First there was the sudden and unfounded arrest of the Workers' representatives in the War Industrial Committee, which was bound to arouse the greatest possible indignation among the munition workers. Then there were the aggressive proclamations of the Military Commandant of the Petrograd district, Habalov, especially the one which was issued on the day of the opening of the Duma, a fortnight before the Revolution. These proclamations threatened to crush by force any attempted demonstrations; but there were in fact no crowds in the Petrograd streets at that time except the food queues. There

\* Mr. Wilton, "Russia's Agony," p. 104. Mr. Wilton says at this point: "He (Protopopov) was not yet a lunatic, and nothing short of complete insanity could have impelled him into such courses." I am by no means of opinion that it is necessary to postulate Protopopov's madness in order to explain the deliberate provocation of the Revolution. The provocation policy was based on a miscalculation as to the eventual attitude of the army. But it is interesting to note that even Mr. Wilton's argument breaks down on his own showing. In an earlier chapter entitled "Razputinism," Mr. Wilton shows that Protopopov was really insane; and in the very chapter from which the above quotation is taken, he says (p. 107), "Protopopov had succumbed to nervous prostration on the Saturday" (*i.e.*, on the eve of the Revolution). And in the same chapter, on p. 114: "Habalov lent himself to a 'brilliant idea' emanating from the *half crazed* Minister (Protopopov): to dress up the police as soldiers." (*Italics are mine.*)

was no reason for these proclamations, but their phraseology and style were familiar to the people of Petrograd. They were not invented by Habalov or Protopopov; they represented the traditional form in which the most ruthless use of the iron hand of oppression had been announced in Russia many times before. It was not the first time that risings were provoked by such threats in advance.

But of all the provocative actions of the Government, the most significant were their dark manœuvres in dealing with the bread supply. In the midst of a prolonged food crisis, which was already making the population very nervous, there was a sudden fall in the supply of bread. The bakers' shops were empty, but the Government made repeated declarations insisting that there was no diminution in the supply of flour to the bakers, and suggesting that it was the bakers themselves who were withholding bread from the people. This provoked intense excitement among the people, who began to loot the bakers' shops, and the bakers hastened to close down. By means of these obvious lies and manœuvres the bread crisis was purposely aggravated.

Altogether, the behaviour of the Government during the last few weeks before the Revolution was without rhyme or reason, except on the assumption that they were inviting a premature rising. Next to the deliberate muddle with the food supply, the most significant thing was the action of the Tsar in relation to the Duma. On the very day of its opening, he invested the Prime Minister with an undated Ukaz for its prorogation, which the Government was at liberty to issue when it liked. Had the Government not intended to provoke revolution, they would undoubtedly have endeavoured to meet it half-way, and to forestall it by granting reforms. But the Tsar and the Government, confident that they could rely on the support of the army at the front, continued to aggravate the excitement of the people and to incense them to the point of revolt.



The rôle of the Tsar in the Revolution has been obscure from the very beginning. Lately there have been particularly obvious attempts to draw a veil over the part which he played. It has been said that the Tsar did not know what was going on in Petrograd, that the messages which were sent to him by Rodzianko and other members of the Duma were intercepted by the Palace Commandant, and so forth. But as a matter of fact the Tsar played a most active part in the Revolution. He knew all that was going on in Petrograd. He was in constant communication by special wire with the Empress at Tsarskoe Selo; and the Empress in turn was connected by special wire with Protopopov. The Tsar knew that a revolt was going to be provoked, and he was getting ready. On Saturday, on the eve of the Revolution, when the Government suddenly perceived that the revolutionary spirit was rising to dangerous heights, when they saw that the garrison was not reliable and that even the Cossacks were inclined to fraternise with the people, they decided to climb down on the most crucial question of the food supply. They consented to hand over the food supplies to the Zemstvos. This amounted to a virtual capitulation on the most important point. But then a very curious thing happened. In the first place, the concessions to the Zemstvos were not announced to the people. Instead, the Government came out on Sunday morning with a violent and arrogant proclamation, which practically inaugurated a state of siege. Instead of announcing the concessions and thereby pacifying the people, they issued this provocative proclamation, which could only have one effect: to transform the latent unrest and indignation into open revolt. This was followed by the prorogation of the Duma—and the Revolution began.

Whence came this sudden stiffening in the attitude of the Government? The Government were beginning to be frightened by the defiant spirit of the Petrograd garrison, and had already begun to climb down. Their

sudden return to high-handed and provocative methods is to be explained by the arrival of orders from the Tsar at headquarters. The Tsar told them to hold on till the arrival of troops from the front. They were informed that troops were on their way to the capital under General Ivanov. These troops did not reach Petrograd: the railway workers, who were on the side of the Revolution, refused to convey them.

What now was the attitude of the Duma? To the very last moment, their attitude was thoroughly loyal to the Tsar and to the Monarchy. The moderate majority of the Duma were indignant with the Government for their inefficient and reactionary conduct; they were angry with the Tsaritsa and even with the Tsar; but they never went a step farther than the Monarchist mentality would allow. At the last moment, when Petrograd was in the hands of the revolutionary forces, they were still sending messages to the Tsar imploring him to grant reforms. They were afraid of revolution; they wanted urgent reforms and an efficient conduct of the war. Only when they saw that if they did not join the Revolution the Revolution would do without them—only then did they drop their loyalty to the Tsardom and come out openly on the side of the Revolution. Even after the Socialists had taken the leadership of the Revolution and the whole garrison had gone over, the right wing of the Duma was still persevering in its loyalty to Nicholas II., while the left wing (Miliukov) dreamed of a Constitutional Monarchy under the Tsarevich as Tsar.

So much for the Tsar and the Duma. The Tsar and his Government deliberately provoked an early Revolution; the Duma did not make the Revolution, but, on the contrary, tried to annul its effects. There remained the workers and soldiers.

The soldiers themselves would have revolted of their own accord sooner or later; their sufferings and humiliations under the old disciplinary system had become well-nigh unbearable. As it was, they saw the

revolution of the people and sympathised. It was their chance of revolution against their own evils; they could not hold aloof. They saved the Revolution by joining the people. Protopopov was defeated by his miscalculation on the attitude of the Petrograd garrison. He knew and expected that some units would probably waver; but he never dreamt that the revolutionary contagion would spread so far and so fast. Nor will history blame him especially for want of insight: nobody expected the wonderful conversion that took place. It was a miracle. And the Tsar was defeated by a similar turning of the tables, when the soldiers at the front stood faithful not to him but to the Revolution.

By their support the soldiers saved the Revolution. But it was not they who initiated it. It was the workers. It was the workers who went out on to the streets to fight it out with Protopopov's police and (as they expected) with the garrison. The soldiers joined them; thus they liberated Russia from the brutal yoke of the reaction. But they did more. They upheld the Revolution as a revolution against the Monarchy, and resisted all attempts to degrade it into a mere overthrow of the existing Government. They vetoed the Duma's project of proclaiming Russia a Constitutional Monarchy. In a critical moment they upheld the character of the Revolution, opening wide the doors for a real regeneration of Russia.

We may now pass on to the very important question of the foundation and organisation of the institutions of the Revolution: the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates and the Provisional Government. The rapidity with which the Soviet came into being is simply marvellous, considering the complete absence of any kind of open and legal political organisation of workers up to the Revolution. The first manifesto of the Soviet to the workers and soldiers, calling on them to send delegates, was issued on Monday morning, at the very beginning of the soldiers' revolt. This manifesto formed a kind of rallying point for the revolutionary

people and for the soldiers who were in revolt; it undoubtedly did a great deal to give the rising a better organised and more definite character. The first sitting of the Soviet took place on the same day. From the very first the delegates were exceedingly practical and objective; they formulated their task with remarkable clarity. Being conscious that the workers were in the vanguard of the Revolution, they still did not consider themselves as a purely class organisation. They spoke in the name of the people, of the democracy; not in the name of a class. They issued their appeal "to all the inhabitants of Petrograd." On this first Monday, when the Tsar was not yet deposed, and the Provisional Government did not yet exist, they formulated their chief demand: "To join forces in fighting for a complete overthrow of the old order; and for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly."

So much for the Soviet. The other organisation formed in the first days of the Revolution was the Provisional Committee of the Duma. But while the workers were bearing the whole weight of responsibility of revolutionary leadership, and running all the risks, the Duma, as I already mentioned, wavered and hesitated. The Duma did not begin to act until the Revolution was already achieved. Only when the revolutionary army came to the Duma and expressed to Rodzianko the will of the army that the old Government should be swept away—only then did the Duma leaders decide to act. But even then the Duma elements did not break with the Tsar and with Tsarism. Rodzianko still went to the Tsar's Government at its invitation to consult with it. As Mr. Wilton, the great partisan of Rodzianko and the "Duma" theory, says: "He (Rodzianko) hoped to learn from them that the Tsar had summoned a Duma Government. He found all the Ministers assembled, and also the Grand Duke Michael. But they had no news."\* This consultation would have led to a Government under the Grand Duke Michael as Regent, except for the resistance of the then

\* "Russia's Agony," p. 121.

War Minister, General Belaiev, who refused to violate his allegiance to the Tsar. The failure of this consultation, which was going on while the Soviet was already formulating its revolutionary programme, led to the formation of the Provisional Committee of the Duma.

Thus the two forces of the Revolution—the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers and the Provisional Committee of the Duma—were formed.

The initiative for the creation of the Provisional Government came from the Duma Committee. The Soviet was consolidating the enormous popular forces which came under its leadership, and had the Duma Committee not taken the initiative in forming the Provisional Government at that moment, it would probably have been formed a day or two later on the initiative of the Soviet.\* A Government formed on the initiative and under the auspices of the Soviet would certainly have been quite different in spirit, and the fortunes of the Revolution would have been very different in that case. As it was, the Soviet had to formulate the conditions of its adherence to the Provisional Government formed by the Duma Committee.

The succeeding days were marked by an unexampled revolutionary joy and enthusiasm, which caught the moderates no less than the revolutionary workers; it even infected the reactionaries. The whole of Russia was experiencing a kind of spiritual upheaval which

\* In the Supplementary Edition to "Izvestia," No. 1, Feb. 28th (two days before the Provisional Government was formed), a Manifesto of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party "to all Citizens of Russia" clearly indicates that the revolutionaries had the clear idea that they themselves must form a Provisional Government of Russia. ". . . It is the duty of the working class and of the revolutionary army to create a *Provisional Revolutionary Government*, which shall lead the newly born Republican order. . . .

"The workers in the factories and the revolutionary army must at once elect their representatives for the provisional revolutionary government, which must be formed under the protection of the revolutionary people and army who have risen against the old order."



nothing could resist. It was in this atmosphere that the moderate elements began to co-operate with the revolutionary democracy.

The moderate elements of the Duma, which only yesterday were communicating with the Tsar, were so carried away by the greatness of the revolutionary impetus that at this moment they were quite transformed. They actually believed in the programme of the revolutionary democracy, and were ready to adopt it. Thus, when the Soviet laid their programme before the Duma Committee, it was unexpectedly accepted, with a single reservation of which we shall speak presently. The Soviet abstained from joining the Provisional Government for two reasons. One was their traditional principle, as Socialists, of taking no part in bourgeois Governments; the other was the fact that it appeared to them quite unnecessary. The Provisional Committee had accepted their programme; they considered it more profitable in the interests of the democracy to exert pressure from outside. Only Kerenski, who was Vice-President of the Soviet Executive, joined the Government on his own risk. He resigned his position in the Soviet, but the Soviet re-elected him and expressed their confidence in him. In the Provisional Government Kerenski alone represented the true democratic principle.

The one point in the Soviet's demands which was not accepted as part of the famous programme of the Provisional Government was point 3, which demanded "abstention from all activities prejudicial to the question of the form of the future Government." And that was at a time when the Tsar was still technically on the throne and the monarchy had not yet been definitely discarded. It is interesting to note that the greatest opposition to this point came from Miliukov and the Cadet Party. There was a great struggle, but the Soviet had so great a faith in the Republican ideals of the Russian people that they did not consider it worth while to break off on this point. They were so sure that the people would reject the monarchy, that

they consented to the adoption of their programme without this point.

The successful formation of this Provisional Government was the surprise, and at the same time the great misfortune, of the Revolution. The Revolution had certain clear and definite issues to solve. If they were not solved, it had missed its purpose. First it had to solve the political question : to abolish the autocracy and create a democratic republic. This task was entrusted to a Government which had no connection with Republican traditions, which consisted in the main of convinced partisans of the monarchist principle. Then the Revolution had to solve the land question. Without opening the land to the peasantry and satisfying the peasants' "hunger for land," the Revolution would be in vain. This great reform was to be carried out by a Government of landowners and politicians who were the avowed enemies of nationalisation of land. Similarly the Revolution had the great task of democratising the foreign policy of Russia and of abolishing all Imperialistic aims. And for the post of Foreign Minister was chosen Miliukov, the most consistent Imperialist of Russia. Finally the Revolution had the task of democratising the army, a task which was of vital importance to the success of the Revolution and the stability of the State. This task was entrusted to the new War Minister, Guchkov, who was the last person to think of carrying out such a policy.

In a few days the wonderful atmosphere of revolution which led to this extraordinary union between the revolutionary and moderate elements had passed by. The Provisional Government honestly tried to fulfil their obligations and to carry out their adopted programme, but it went against the grain. Their real feelings and opinions asserted themselves more and more, and one point after another was shelved or indefinitely postponed. Then began the fatal disagreements and the still more fatal compromises between the Provisional Government and the revolutionary democracy.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### THE GREAT TRIUMPH

**I**N the official account of the first sitting of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, we read ("Izvestia," No. 1): "Notwithstanding the enthusiasm with which those present were filled, the proceedings were strictly businesslike. The meeting was only interrupted a few times by the welcoming of representatives of different army units who had risen in defence of liberty and revolution." This account is exceedingly characteristic, and might refer equally well to the whole of the first period of the Revolution. In spite of the great enthusiasm and exaltation of feeling which prevailed, the Revolution was distinguished by seriousness and restraint and "realism." Only now and then was the businesslike progress of the Revolution lightened for a moment by flashes of enthusiasm and joy. The first of these manifestations of triumph and exaltation took place three days after the formation of the Soviet, when the Soviet decided to end the strike and recommence the work in the munition factories. It was the first great sign of the power of the revolutionary democracy. It was the first great trial of the discipline and organisation of the Petrograd proletariat. The decision of the Soviet to commence work again so soon made a great impression. At the same time the Soviet recognised the urgency of proceeding with the elaboration of the economic demands of the workers. Six days later, they were able to announce the great victory of the working classes, the establishment of the 8-hour day and the recognition of Shop-stewards' Committees ("Society starost").

But the greatest outbreaks of enthusiasm were in connection with the return of the revolutionary exiles from Siberia and from abroad. First was the celebration of

the return of the Social Democratic members of the second Duma, who had been in exile for 10 years. Their leader Tseretelli afterwards played a great and noble part in the development of the Revolution. All regiments sent guards of honour to meet him and his companions at the station, and delegations of the workers came with banners. After an enthusiastic and tempestuous welcome at the station they were solemnly received by the Soviet, and Tseretelli was elected as a Vice-President. There was great enthusiasm on the return of Plekhanov, the founder of Russian Social Democracy, of Breshko-Breshkovskaia, the "grand-mother of the Revolution," and of Chernov, the leader of the Social Revolutionary Party. But the greatest celebrations were made on Lenin's arrival. The news of his arrival came unexpectedly, and on a Sunday when no papers were printed; but it spread with tremendous rapidity and a large crowd of delegates, soldiers' and sailors' guards of honour and workers assembled on the square outside the railway station to welcome him. Speeches were made by Lenin and by the President of the Soviet amid scenes of great enthusiasm.

The most wonderful day of celebration in the Revolution was the 23rd of March, the day of the funeral of the victims of the Revolution. It was a solemn and sacred vow of the new democracy—an initiation before the open graves of those who had given up their lives for its sake. It was at the same time a triumphal review of the revolutionary forces in their silent and mighty living power. It was an historical day—a landmark in the transition from the old Russia to the new, from tyranny to liberty. From the very early morning the inhabitants of Petrograd flocked out into the streets : hundreds of thousands took part in the triumphal procession; literally thousands and tens of thousands of banners and flags were carried. There was not one incident, not one accident, to mar the effect of this ceremony. "In three weeks of Russian freedom, her people has grown to maturity. The most brilliant proof is the day of the 23rd of March;

the ideal order, the irreproachable discipline, with not a single untoward incident in the course of 12 hours while the army of the Revolution, *one and a-half* million people, passed the graves, paying their last tribute of honour to their fallen comrades"\* ("Izvestia," March 25th).

Among these days of great triumph and exaltation we must mention the 14th of March, exactly a fortnight after the Revolution, when the Soviet addressed its famous manifesto to the peoples of the world. With this manifesto the revolutionary democracy began the struggle for peace.

\* The "Times" of April 7 published the following account of the funeral of victims of the Revolution.

"(From our own correspondent.) Petrograd, April 5.

"The funeral of the victims of the Revolution took place to-day in the Champ de Mars. The first of the six processions started for its destination about 8 a.m. Owing to a heavy fall of snow not more than 5,000 persons figured in the contingent furnished by one of the most important quarters of the city. Another procession numbered about 2,000. Banners with inscriptions were displayed, dirges were sung, and bands played the 'Marseillaise.' Judging by the processions, most of the victims of the Revolution will not lie in the common grave in the Champ de Mars, to which only about 150 bodies will be conveyed. The families of the remainder have preferred to bury their own dead, with the rites of the Orthodox Church."

In his book "Russia's Agony," Mr. Wilton, the Petrograd correspondent of the "Times," complains that it was impossible to speak the truth about Russia after the Revolution. This is a very grave charge. "The Soviet Régime," he says, "was far worse than the Okhrana" (p. 114). I quote his despatch about the funeral literally from beginning to end, and I may be permitted to ask: What obstacles were placed in Mr. Wilton's way, that he was obliged to make such a miserable departure from the truth in this instance? How were the British public to have any idea of revolutionary Russia when even about its simplest, its humanly most thrilling incidents, such insidious untruths were published in this country? This was only the beginning of a long series of perversions and misrepresentations.





## Part V: The Struggle for Peace



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### THE REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY

**I**N recalling the first steps of the revolutionary democracy in their struggle for peace, we are carried away by two currents of feeling. One is a deep feeling of pride and joy at their almost prophetic clearness and foresight in realising the tasks that confronted the democracy of Russia and of the world. The other is a feeling of anger and sorrow at the united international reaction which destroyed all the hopes and efforts of new Russia.

Whatever may be the fate of Russia, however deplorable may be the situation of the revolutionary democracy in Russia to-day, however offensive and triumphant the slanderers of the Revolution, the noble utterances and acts of that young democracy of Russia will remain as a brilliant page in history. Openly and joyfully revolutionary Russia expressed the aspirations and hopes of the democracy of the world. Confident in the triumph of democracy, it addressed few and simple words about peace to the peoples at war. The Manifesto "To the Peoples of the World" which the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers issued on the 14th\* of March, exactly a fortnight after the Revolution, is an historical event. It was the first step in the great struggle for peace and democracy which is now being worked out slowly and painfully, and this step may proudly be recorded by history.

#### "TO THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

"Comrades! Proletarians and Workers of all lands!

"We, Russian workers and soldiers, united in the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, greet you heartily and send you the news of a great

\* I use the Russian or the "old" calendar.

achievement. The Russian democracy has shattered in the dust the age-long despotism of the Tsar, and enters in your circle as an equal member, as a mighty power in the struggle for our common liberation. Our victory is a great victory for the freedom and democracy of the world. The chief pillars of reaction in the world, the 'gendarmes of Europe,' are no more. May the earth turn to heavy granite on their graves. Long live freedom! Long live the international solidarity of the proletariat and its struggle for final victory!

"Our deed is not yet completed: the shades of the old order have not yet dispersed, and not a few enemies are gathering their forces against the Russian Revolution. Yet our conquests are mighty. The peoples of Russia will express their will in the Constituent Assembly, which is to be called together as soon as possible, on the basis of universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage. And already now we can predict with certainty that the democratic republic will triumph in Russia. The Russian people enjoys full political freedom. To-day it can say its sovereign word in the internal self-determination of the country and in its foreign policy. And, turning to all the peoples, desolated and massacred as they are in this inhuman war, we announce that the time has come to begin the decisive struggle with the grasping ambitions of the governments of all countries; the time has come for the peoples to take into their own hands the decision of the question of war and peace.

"Conscious of its revolutionary power, the Russian democracy announces that it will use all means to oppose the annexationist policy of its ruling classes, and invites the peoples of Europe to united and vigorous action on behalf of peace.

"And we turn to our brother-proletarians of the Austro-German alliance, and, above all, to the German proletariat. From the first days of the war you have been assured that in taking up arms against autocratic Russia you were defending European civilisation



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against Asiatic despotism. Many of you saw in this a justification of your support of the war. To-day this justification also is no more; democratic Russia cannot be a menace to freedom and civilisation.

"We shall unflinchingly defend our own freedom against all reactionary threats—whether from within or from without. The Russian Revolution will not retreat before the bayonets of invaders and will not let itself be crushed by external military force. But we appeal to you : shake off the yoke of your half-autocratic régime, as the Russian people shook off the Tsarist autocracy; refuse to serve as instruments of gain and annexation and violence in the hands of kings, landowners, and bankers—then in friendly alliance of our forces we will put a stop to the awful slaughter which is degrading mankind and darkening the great days of the birth of Russian freedom.

"Workers of all lands! We hold out to you the hand of brotherhood across mountains of our brothers' corpses, across rivers of innocent blood and tears, across smoking ruins of towns and villages, across the broken treasures of civilisation : we call you to the rebirth and strengthening of international unity. In it is the pledge of our future victories and of the complete liberation of mankind.

"Proletarians of all lands, unite !

"PETROGRAD SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND  
SOLDIERS' DELEGATES."

It is difficult to name another public utterance with such transparent honesty of purpose; yet, on the other hand, it is difficult to name one which led to greater misrepresentations and more shameless calumnies. The authors of this manifesto were branded as "traitors," "German hirelings," and agents of German peace. Their more benevolent opponents, with a patronising wave of the hand, and almost with compassion, called them "revolutionary fanatics and hopeless idealists." The name "idealist," when applied to a statesman, is nowadays considered as the worst criticism possible.

But as a matter of fact there probably never was a better synthesis of true idealism and genuine statesmanship than in the conduct of the Russian democracy in its struggle for peace. The element of idealism was strong indeed. It was the great dream of bringing peace to the tortured world. It was the ideal of reviving the Proletarian International. It was the desire to see the war over ; to be able to start the great task of social reconstruction in building the new Russia.

Undoubtedly these great and high ideals determined the first peace move of the democracy. But these ideals were not the only, not even the main, motives of the policy of the democracy in their struggle for peace. The main motives which impelled them were the actual realities of Russia. They worked for peace, not because they wanted peace, but because Russia *needed* peace. The bitter legacy they inherited from the old régime made the continuation of the war all but impossible. The disorganisation of Russia's economic system and the disintegration of the army made the prolongation of the war a sheer impossibility. At all events, the army, as the Revolution found it was unable to carry on the war. The greatest concern for the Russian democracy was the army. It was in an altogether unstable and insecure condition. It was in imminent danger of collapse ; the disruptive forces tended to be greater than the forces holding it together. Something had to be done to inspire it with new confidence. I have already mentioned above that the whole foundations of the army had to be reformed to restore it to a condition of fighting fitness. But the democratisation of the army meant more than the mere democratisation of its disciplinary system ; it involved no less the democratisation of the aims for which the army was to fight. The first task confronting the Russian democracy was to give the army the confidence that it was fighting a purely defensive war. Had the democracy not instinctively understood the dangerous condition of the army, had they not solemnly repudiated all aims of conquest and

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begun the struggle for peace, the army would have disintegrated much more rapidly and would have relapsed into a still more unhealthy condition. The democracy of Russia had only two alternatives : either to begin an active and systematic struggle for peace, or to wait and see how peace would come by the inevitable collapse. Peace had to be achieved. Either it had to be brought about by a strong and definite policy, or it would be forced on the country as a result of complete disorganisation. The repudiation of annexationist policy and the struggle for peace were expressions of the idealism of the Russian democracy. The Russian revolutionaries certainly could not have acted otherwise. They had been opponents of war all their lives; they saw and confessed the imperialistic basis of this war; they were bound to protest with all their might against its prolongation, all the more so after the Revolution. The Revolution had created such a mighty spiritual exaltation that they believed more than ever in the triumph of the ideals of humanity, democracy, and internationalism. But these idealistic motives are insufficient to explain the energy and impetus with which the Russian democracy carried on their great struggle for peace. The point of view and the ideas which inspired them in their struggle for peace are fully explained by their idealistic motives. On the other hand, the force, the energy, the intensity with which they carried on that struggle are to be attributed solely to the actual conditions of the national economy and of the army.

The appalling condition of the army was one factor determining the struggle for peace. The other idea that obsessed the Russian democracy was the prevailing and traditional fear that Germany would come to crush the Revolution and try to reinstate the Monarchy. At this stage it is exceedingly difficult to describe how deeply and how hopefully democratic Russia wanted a revolution in Germany. The thought of a revolution in Germany was like a passion which obsessed the workers

and soldiers of Russia. At the front and in the rear they passionately awaited and hoped for the German revolution, and believed in its possibility. Their own Revolution seemed to them only a prelude to the regeneration of the world. The Russian Revolution would never achieve its objects unless there was a revolution in Germany : such was the prevailing idea.

The supporters of a fight to a finish tried to exploit this idea for their own ends. They began an agitation for the continuation of the war. They said : " You want a revolution in Germany ! We all want it ! Then get on with the war : beat Germany, destroy German militarism, and carry the banner of Revolution into Germany." Such contentions in the Press and on the platform were, however, too obviously inconsistent with the whole policy and mentality of their authors. The democracy knew that those who gave them this good advice were the last to think of revolution in Germany, or to desire it. The whole purpose of this warlike agitation was simply the satisfaction of grabbing, imperialistic ambitions : the annexation of Galicia, the dismemberment of Austria, the destruction of the Turkish Empire, the annexation of Constantinople and the Straits, annexation of Armenia, etc., etc. The Russian democracy understood only too well that such a continuation of the war not only could not lead to revolution in Germany, but could only hinder that process of internal disruption in the Central Empires which began with the Russian Revolution and took place under its influence. The preceding years of war had proved with absolute clearness that there could be no hope of destroying German unity by fighting the German armies. The more aggressively, the more successfully the Russian armies fought, the greater became the unity of Germany. Germany began to show signs of disintegration only after the Russian Revolution. Only from the moment when Russia ceased to be a menace to Germany and Austria, from the moment when Russia repudiated the ambitious aims of

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Tsardom, did the *Burgfrieden* in Germany begin to waver. All attempts to break down Germany by external force have led and are bound to lead to a strengthening of Germany's internal unity. The same would be true of England, America, or any other nation. Had the Russian democracy had a fresh and well-equipped army at their disposal, they would none the less first have tried the *political* method of destroying German unity. As it was, they had no other alternative.

But there was yet another element which determined the peace move of the Russian democracy. I refer to their desire to frustrate the threatened German offensive. While the first two motives of Russia's peace policy—the necessity to counteract the growing dissolution of the army and the hope of undermining the political unity of Germany—have been perverted and misrepresented, this third element has been completely ignored in Allied countries. To grasp the full reality of this motive, it is necessary to remember the state of affairs in Russia immediately after the Revolution. No sooner were the first few days of the Revolution over than Russia was seized by the fear that the Germans were preparing an offensive. Persistent rumours stated that Petrograd was in immediate danger, that the Germans were about to land troops on the Riga front, and so forth. Who disseminated such rumours, and with what purpose, it is not necessary to consider here. Maybe there was some foundation for them, and some of their authors were acting in good faith. But there is no doubt that to a great extent these rumours emanated from the new War Office, which was stupid enough to imagine that anxiety was a salutary state of mind for the Russian people at that time. Such tactics were a very crude mistake, but that is not the question here. The important thing is that immediately after the Revolution the Russian army and democracy were faced with the question of a possible German offensive. That the Russian army was at that time absolutely unable to



repel a great offensive was too obvious. Thus the manifesto to the peoples of the world, and "above all, to the German proletariat," was a *tactical* move. I do not mean merely to say that it turned out to be a tactical move; I want to emphasise that it was purposely intended as such. I base my statement on conversations with the members of the Executive Committee of the Soviet who drafted this manifesto. In relating the circumstances which led to the elaboration of this step, they emphasised that they were influenced by anxiety and expectation that Hindenburg was preparing a crushing blow against Russia. My view is based on these conversations, but I can support it with a very important document which confirms it absolutely. On the 14th of March, the very day when the Soviet addressed its manifesto to the world, the *Izvestia* published a leading article about the war which explains all the motives that impelled the leaders of the democracy. The article concludes: "Evidently Hindenburg intends to attempt an attack against Russia so as to weaken, by means of victories, the effect of the Russian Revolution, and to check the advance of revolution in Germany and Austria. . . . And the danger from this side is not yet over. The German offensive must be arrested by a double blow on the front and in the rear. . . . On the front it must be repelled by military efforts; *into the rear of Germany we must direct our appeal for an immediate conclusion of the war.*"

Thus the manifesto to the peoples of the world was, so to say, a peace offensive, or even a "peace-trap." It was intended to break up and disorganise the military and social unity of Germany and of Austria. And it achieved considerable results. It would have been decisive if the Russian bourgeoisie and the short-sighted diplomacy of the Allies had not hastened to the assistance of German militarism.

There is a widespread belief in the Allied countries that the Russian Revolution was saved by the Allies, who, by their offensive on the West, paralysed

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Germany's striking power on the Russian front. This idea must emphatically be contradicted. There was no German offensive, not because Germany had to transfer her Eastern army to the Western front, but because of the political situation in Germany and Austria. The attempt to crush the Russian Revolution by force was at that time a very risky undertaking from the point of view of Germany's rulers. And as far as a mass transference of troops from the Eastern to the Western front is concerned, it has never been proved to have taken place. It is a great misfortune that figures relating to the movements of armies are used very arbitrarily. For instance, since the Revolution the Allied Press have proclaimed that, thanks to revolutionary disintegration, fraternisation, and so forth, the Germans have been able to transfer the greater part of their troops from the Eastern front to the West, and that the Allies have therefore had to bear the full brunt of Germany's forces. Yet even six months after the Revolution, Russia kept on the Eastern front 92 German divisions, *i.e.*, considerably more than at any other period of the war, in addition to several Turkish divisions and the overwhelming majority of the Austro-Hungarian army.\*

We now see that the Soviet's attitude to war and peace was based on two foundations: the struggle for

\* (p. 10). In a letter to the Press, published on October 11th, 1917, Lieut.-General C. N. Bessino, the Russian Plenipotentiary accredited to the British Armies, writes: "It is over six months since our Revolution began, and our armies continue to hold the enemy's forces on the front, besides which, during this time, his forces, far from diminishing, have up to the present been augmented."

Mr. H. Warner Allen, the well-known British correspondent with the French armies, writes on September 24, 1917: "It is to be observed that the number of German divisions on the Russian front at the present moment is higher than it has ever been before, viz., 92, compared with 79 a year ago, when Brussilov had just been brought to a halt in Galicia and Mackensen was overrunning Roumania, and 67 in September, 1915, at the close of the great thrust in Poland. . . . Thus the number of German troops on the Eastern front was higher than ever, and it is noteworthy that the Russian Revolution did not tempt the enemy to reduce his forces in the East."

peace and the revolutionary defence of the country. The two factors are intimately connected with each other, and were of equal value in determining the Russian attitude. Here was a clear-sighted and harmonious policy; it proposed peace to the enemy if they would repudiate conquests; it promised help to the Allies if they would repudiate imperialism. "We are ready to hold out the hand of brotherhood to the peoples of Germany and Austria, if they will compel their rulers to renounce all conquests. But we will fight with our weapons in our hands against the attack of German and Austrian invaders. Thus we shall compel the people of the Austro-German alliance to choose between war and peace.

"We are ready to support by force of arms the peoples of England, France, and Italy, if they compel their Governments to renounce all conquests and are none the less forced to defend themselves against Germany. But we shall energetically protest against the continuation of the war for capitalist interests, whatever the national flag whose protection they enjoy." (*Izvestia*, No. 29, March 31, 1917.)

The Russian democracy did not merely demand a declaration of Allied War-Aims. They aimed at a formal definite proposal of peace on the basis of no annexations or indemnities and the right of peoples to determine their own destinies. They wanted to force Germany into a position where she had to choose between a just peace and a continuation of the war. The events following the Russian Revolution and the appeal to the peoples of the world were such as to awaken hope. But the scheme of the Soviet was frustrated, and the first hindrance was the opposition of the Russian Imperialists and of the Provisional Government itself.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

THE Manifesto of the 14th of March to the Peoples of the World made an enormous impression all over Russia. It was felt that a new epoch had begun ; that the beginnings of freedom and justice, sanctified by the Russian Revolution, were permeating foreign policy as well. It was a day of great joy, a festival for the Russian democracy. But the more gloomy was the outlook of the propertied and ruling classes. It was as severe a blow for them as the monarchical principle had received a fortnight earlier. In general, the Revolution was visibly departing from their ideas. It was taking a wholly unexpected direction. The propertied classes saw that it was threatening to pass them by without fulfilling their cherished dreams. Under the old régime they, the economic chiefs of the country, the big landowners and representatives of trade and industry, had had to take a second place. The Court aristocracy and the higher ranks of the bureaucracy had usurped their position and set a limit to their power in the State. The Revolution having swept away the throne and dispersed the bureaucracy, the propertied classes thought that at last they would be able to enter the field as leaders of the country, and come into their own. They imagined the Revolution as making smooth the way for the flourishing of capitalism and the triumph of industrial enterprise. The Revolution was to release them from the heavy guardianship of the bureaucracy; the war was to satisfy their dream of new markets, the annexation of Constantinople and the Straits, Armenia, Galicia, and undisputed power in the Balkans. They

dreamed a golden dream. It is easy to imagine their disappointment when they saw the new course which the Revolution began to take.

The ideals of the Revolution in the realm of foreign policy amazed and stupefied them more than anything else. The victory of the democracy in this respect would amount to a complete defeat of the propertied classes. On the other hand, the preservation of imperialistic principles in foreign policy would render all revolutionary reforms in the internal, social and political life of the country illusory. They decided to oppose the foreign policy of the democracy with all their might. Every means was used; they fought the democracy openly and undermined it secretly. In this struggle between the democracy and the propertied classes, the latter are generally represented as upholding, not imperialistic aims of conquest, but simply the most elementary national interests of Russia, and as struggling only against the disorganising and disintegrating influences of the democracy. This contention is absolutely untrue. Their attitude was not only imperialistic, but cynically and unashamedly so. It was a virtual mania of imperialism. If we look at the actual stages in the struggle, we have ample evidence that the first blow the Russian democracy received in their struggle for a just peace was dealt by the propertied classes and by their true representative, Miliukov.

In its Manifesto the Democracy announced that it would "use all means to oppose the annexationist policy of its ruling classes." The Soviet, therefore, proceeded to demand that the Provisional Government should publicly announce their repudiation of annexations. There began a struggle behind the scenes. Miliukov definitely and decisively opposed any such declaration. The Government, with the exception of Kerenski, sympathised with Miliukov but were unwilling to oppose the democracy openly. They tried to compromise and shelve the question. But public



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opinion in all Russia was on the side of the Soviet. Numerous provincial Soviets, army congresses and conferences of political parties, and the whole of the democratic Press, expressed their approval of the Soviet's foreign policy with great enthusiasm. The Provisional Government could resist no longer. On the 27th of March, thirteen days after the issue of the Manifesto, the Provisional Government issued a declaration on the war to the citizens of Russia. In this document the Government declared that "the aim of free Russia is not to rule over other nations, not to deprive them of their national possessions, not to annex foreign territory by force of arms, but to found a lasting peace on the basis of self-determination of peoples. The Russian people does not endeavour to strengthen its external power at the expense of other peoples; it does not aim at the enslavement or humiliation of any people."

Democratic Russia was exultant. It was a victory: a solemn and mighty victory. The Government of one of the belligerent States—of that very State which had been the most aggressive and the most openly imperialistic of all—began to speak the language of the advanced democracy. Indeed, the dawn had come for Russia. There was some cause for enthusiasm.

But it was an illusory victory. A few weeks later the insincerity of the Provisional Government's declaration led to a terrible "split," to the first serious clash between the Democracy and the propertied classes of new Russia. After this conflict was over we learned from the candid revelations made by Miliukov himself (in a "private" meeting of Duma Members on May 4th, and in the May Congress of the Cadet Party) how great the insincerity of the Government's conduct had been. It appears from these revelations that Miliukov had intentionally put the Government's declaration in the form of a manifesto to the citizens of Russia instead of giving it the form of a diplomatic act. In other words, Miliukov purposely gave to the declaration, which the masses of Russia interpreted as

an international statement, a form which, as it were, made it non-existent as a diplomatic statement of Russia's policy.

Miliukov by no means stood alone in his fight against the democratic policy. On the very day when the Provisional Government decided to make its concession to the Democracy, the party of the Cadets held its first Congress since the Revolution. The deliberations of the Cadet Party are the more significant, in that they really represented the spirit of the Provisional Government, though the latter was of course not formally identified with the party. The speeches made at this Congress now appear simply fantastic. Reading over these speeches at the present time, one cannot help feeling that the party was suffering from a kind of imperialistic madness. All that is difficult to understand in the conduct of Miliukov as the first revolutionary Foreign Minister becomes comprehensible when we realise that he was at the same time the head of the Cadet Party. In the Cadet Congress F. Rodichev, a member of the Provisional Government, proposed the resolution on the question of the war. According to the newspaper reports\* he made his speech with an emphasis and power which only Rodichev could achieve. (Rodichev is one of the best orators in Russia. He is the author of the famous epigram about "Stolypin's tie.") He made an enormous impression: his speech was interrupted by unanimous outbursts of approval and acclamation. Rodichev began his speech by emphatically repudiating the suggestion that they were cherishing any annexationist aims. He went on to enumerate the various territorial changes in question. They were out for a free and united Poland. That was the reverse of annexation. . . . "Where, then, is our second annexation—the annexation of Galicia? I do not know who suggested this, but I know that the new conception of right will not tolerate the disposal of

\* I quote from the account in the Petrograd *Den* of March 28th.

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peoples against their will, and therefore there can be no question of any annexation of Galicia, unless it be a unison of free Galicia with free Russia. The Austrian Chauvinists tell us that we want to dismember their Empire. Yes, we do want to dismember this Empire, this Empire of violence and tortures, this Empire whose history throughout the nineteenth century is a history of violence, deceit, corruption, falsehood, perfidy and cruelty. . . . Citizens, we aim at the liberation of Armenia. The establishment of an autonomous Armenia: is that an annexation? We have a great sin on our souls, in our indifference to the fate of the Armenians at the time when the voice of free England called us out in defence of Armenia. And Constantinople? From whom are we going to annex it? From the Turks. Gentlemen, you know that Constantinople is least of all a Turkish city. You know that, if our memory does not deceive us, there are 140,000 Turks there and the remainder are Christians, Greeks and Jews.\* Citizens, in this war we have our duty to our Allies. . . . At the end of the war I want to look them straight in the face; I do not want to expect them to ask: What then, when we were sacrificing our children, our sons and brothers on the peninsula of Gallipoli in order to open up the way to Constantinople for you, was that merely your caprice? . . . It is our duty to raise our voice and cry: Russia is with you. Do not depart one iota from her legitimate demands, one iota from her life-interests; do not let yourselves be confused by the shouts that you may hear on your way; stand firm to the end—we shall support you."

Rodichev's speech was received with tremendous ovations by the Cadet Congress, and made a deep impression on them. It was immediately proposed to close

\* The non-Cadet Press criticised Rodichev's speech very strongly. The *Den* remarked: "Constantinople being inhabited by Turks, Greeks, and Jews, it is only right that it should therefore belong to Russia!"

the sitting. "Nobody can say anything more after Rodichev." "Print his speech and distribute it in millions of copies at the front and among the people."

On the proposal for adjournment the representative of the Tartars, Maxudov, member of the Duma, voiced a strong warning that the thirty million Mahommedans in the country, loyal and affectionate subjects of Russia, did not desire the humiliation of Turkey. "If the party wants to count on their sympathy, let it delete from its programme the destruction of Turkey and the annexation of Constantinople." Maxudov's speech was received with hisses and murmurs of disapproval, and was answered by Kokoshkin, who pointed out that the conquest of Constantinople was a matter of cold calculation and not of feeling, a political and not a religious question.

In its Resolution the Congress expresses its complete confidence in the Provisional Government "*in its foreign policy, which is based on faithfulness to established treaties.*" It further expresses its conviction that the Provisional Government "will unflinchingly stand by the war-aims of liberation of small nationalities to which our democratic Allies are pledged." After the Resolution was passed, Miliukov arrived at the Congress, and further emphasised its meaning in the following words: "I associate myself with your decision on the war. The whole world is interested in the attitude of our Party towards the war. The eyes of all the world are on us. They expected a wise decision from you, and you have made it."

I have purposely described the proceedings of this Congress fully and in detail, as they express very clearly the mentality of the propertied classes of Russia and of the Provisional Government at that time. The Foreign policy expressed by the Cadet Congress, and especially Rodichev's speech, aroused great indignation in the country. In the Allied countries it made the opposite impression, and was taken as the voice of Russia. The appeal of the Russian imperialists to the Allies "not to

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depart one iota" from Russia's imperialistic demands was taken by the Allies as the appeal of Russia.

The less notice did they take of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which was held at the same time, and expressed the views of the democracy on war and peace no less definitely. Its Resolution on War was ratified by numerous workers' organisations and army units, and by the Minsk Congress of the army at the front. It expressed the definite policy "to which the revolutionary democracy is pledged and from which it will not depart," and marks an important stage in the struggle for peace:

"In its proclamation of the 14th of March to the peoples of the world, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates announced the unalterable decision of the Russian democracy to realise in its foreign policy the same principles of freedom and justice which it had proclaimed for the internal life of Russia.

"Numerous assemblies of workers, soldiers and citizens throughout Russia have confirmed this decision and expressed the will of the people, which, having stood out for its own freedom, will not allow its revolutionary inspiration to be used for acts of violence against other peoples, or for open or covert aims of annexation and indemnities.

"The Executive Committee of the Soviet has entered into relations with the Provisional Government, pointing out the immediate necessity for free Russia to renounce all the aims of conquest of Tsarism.

"On March 27 the Provisional Government published its manifesto to the citizens of Russia. The Russian democracy attaches great significance to this act of the Provisional Government, and sees in it an important step towards the realisation of democratic principles in the realm of foreign politics. The Soviets will energetically support every step of the Provisional Government in this direction, and they *summon all peoples, whether of the Allied countries or of those at war with Russia, to bring pressure to bear on their*



*Governments for the repudiation of all aims of conquest. At the same time, every nation of both Alliances must insist on its Government obtaining from its Allies a common renouncement of annexations and indemnities. For its own part, the Executive Committee emphasises the necessity for negotiations of the Provisional Government with the Allies for the elaboration of a general agreement to that effect.*

“The revolutionary people of Russia will continue its efforts to bring about an early peace on the principles of brotherhood and equality of free nations. The official renouncement of annexationist programmes by all Governments is a powerful weapon for the conclusion of the war on such terms.

“Until these terms are realised, until the war is over, the Russian democracy recognises that the destruction of the army, the weakening of its strength and stability and fitness for active operations, would be the greatest blow for the cause of freedom and for the life-interests of the country. In order to defend revolutionary Russia most energetically from all external encroachments and to offer the most decisive resistance to all attempts to hinder the further success of the Revolution, the Soviet summons revolutionary Russia to mobilise all the living forces of the country in all branches of national life for the strengthening of the front and of the rear. This is the imperative demand of the moment; it is indispensable for the success of the great Revolution.”

After this Congress the Soviet's policy, being endorsed by the provincial Soviets and by the democracy of all Russia, was firm and confident. They demanded immediate diplomatic steps towards a common repudiation of annexationist aims by Russia and the Allies. The Provisional Government began again the game of shelving and hawing. At that time the disagreement between the democracy and the Provisional Government on almost all points of policy was beginning to crystallise. It became evident that the Provisional Government, which had undertaken to carry out the pro-

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gramme of the Revolution, was simply incapable of doing so. All the urgent economic and agrarian reforms were set aside. The most urgent business of a more democratic organisation of the Army was progressing very slowly, thanks to the hindrances put in its way by the War Office. Urgent and necessary changes in the military and civil service were not realised. The most deplorable thing was that the Government neglected to purge the diplomatic and consular services of all the reactionary elements. It was a paradox that revolutionary Russia continued to be represented by people who had grown up in the spirit of the corrupt and autocratic Tsarist diplomacy, and were imbued with that spirit. In short, in all the urgent questions raised by the Revolution, the disagreements between the democracy and the Government became more and more irreconcilable. Popular discontent was becoming stronger. The extreme Left got more and more material for their propaganda: "All power to the Soviets!" And yet the dominant mood of the democracy as a whole, including the army, was one of tolerance. At all costs they wanted to avoid a split, and were content to refrain from bringing matters to a head, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Guchkov's obstruction policy in the question of army reform aroused indignation in the army and was generally condemned and despised. A demand for his resignation would easily have removed him, but even in this case the democracy wanted to postpone the conflict. There was only one matter which could not be postponed, in which the democracy could not and would not compromise—namely, the need for an energetic and active foreign policy in accordance with the international manifesto of the Soviet. In this matter the democracy would not be arrested by any fear of a split. And a split was bound to come, because all the demands and protests of the democracy to the Government remained unheeded. Miliukov stood out in defence of imperialism.

In his own words (at the May Congress of the Cadet Party), "To the last day on which I left the Ministry, I gave the Allies no pretext to speak of the renouncement of Constantinople and the Straits by Russia." in his imperialistic mania he violated the will of the people with remarkable simplicity and impudence.

The Provisional Government tried to reconcile the democracy with Miliukov. They gave promises and assurances, saying that conversations were going on and so forth. The democracy demanded an open note to the Allies, but the Government avoided all open courses. The situation became uneasy, and the Government were evidently veering to Miliukov's side and not intending to send a note. On April 14 they published in the papers the following *démenti*: "Statements have appeared in the Press to the effect that the Provisional Government is preparing a note on the aims and purposes of the war, with the purpose of approaching the Allied Governments in the next few days. The Provisional Government begs to announce that these statements are not in accordance with the facts." This *démenti*, which violated all the promises of the Government and definitely compromised the position of the democracy in its foreign policy, aroused a storm of indignation. The Soviet thereupon adopted extreme measures. On April 16 a general meeting of the Soviet was announced, with the object of settling the attitude of the democracy to the "Liberty Loan." The Executive Committee chose this as an opportune subject on which to bring the conflict with the Government on the question of foreign policy to a head. It proposed a postponement of the consideration of this question for three days, informing the Government that the democracy would decide its attitude to the loan in accordance with the Government's attitude on the question of a note to the Allied Powers. This amounted to a virtual ultimatum, expressed in a very tactful form. The Provisional Government began to reconsider the question. Miliukov stood firm; Kerenski

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threatened to resign if the note was not sent immediately. The Government decided to send it. Next day was April 18—the first of May in the European style—and the workers celebrated the first May-day since the Revolution. It was the greatest and the most glorious May-day ever celebrated. The international significance of this holiday was enhanced by the fact that the Government was known to have consented to send a note. On that morning I saw Kerenski, and he told me of this new victory of the democracy with the greatest elation and hope.

This "new victory," which was nothing but a new mean falsification by Miliukov, very nearly became a source of civil war. This is how Miliukov himself described his proceeding to the May Congress of the Cadets: "When the representative of the democracy began to insist that the Act of March 27 must be converted into a diplomatic document, I decided on a new compromise. I decided not to send a note, but to despatch the original document itself (the declaration to the citizens of Russia of March 27) with a covering letter which would *safeguard the Foreign Office from any inaccurate interpretation or misrepresentation of the compromise.*"

This note (the "covering letter" referred to in his speech) simply annulled all the ideas which were expressed in the declaration of March 27. It was simply an appeal for a fight to a finish and a reaffirmation of the imperialistic policy of old Russia in its entirety. It was a challenge to the Russian democracy, to the whole of the Russian people. The sequel will be remembered. There was a spontaneous outburst of indignation; the crisis came to a head. The indecision of the Government and the Machiavellian tactics of Miliukov had to be done away with. But the indecision of the Government was met by a corresponding indecision and wavering on the part of the democracy. The great clash led only to a miserable compromise. Miliukov was compelled to send a new note to the Allies to undo

the effects of his previous one, but the new note was indefinite and only helped to increase the confusion. The crisis was settled by Miliukov's and Guchkov's resignations,\* and the Coalition Government was formed.

The struggle for peace entered a new phase. But by this time the adverse attitude of the Allies was beginning to take effect.

\* Miliukov afterwards boasted he did not leave the Government but was turned out.



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE ALLIES

TO speak of the conduct of the Allies during the struggle for peace is a very delicate and responsible task, and I am very reluctant to undertake it. But unfortunately the part played by the Allied diplomacy was so significant and so active that it is quite impossible to pass it over in silence. All that took place in Russia after the Revolution cannot be understood without a detailed explanation of the part played by the diplomacy of the Allies. I have already mentioned the disappointment caused in Russia by the cold, strange, and unfriendly attitude of the Allies to the Russian Revolution. The cold reception of the Revolution in England was undoubtedly a severe blow to Anglo-Russian friendship. But, after all, that is unimportant in comparison with what happened afterwards. I recall these initial blunders of the Allies,\* since they

\* Among these minor blunders I may indicate two which especially agitated the democracy. First there was the altogether unjustifiable interference of the British and French authorities in regulating the return of revolutionary exiles and selecting which should be allowed to return and which should not, a process which became known as "infiltration." The second was the insufficiently cautious observance of diplomatic usage by the Allied embassies. For instance, the British Ambassador received deputations from the Cossacks and made speeches to them which were interpreted as an interference in the internal political conflicts of Russia. Under the heading, "Sir Buchanan and the Cossacks," the *Novaia Zhizn* of October 18, writes: "What sort of leading articles would have appeared in the *Times* and the *Morning Post* if the Russian Ambassador in London had received a delegation of Sinn Feiners and expressed his hope that they would rescue the country from a grave crisis? . . . Why, then, do English usages appear so susceptible of modifications on Russian soil? Why does Sir Buchanan find it possible to make exactly such speeches to the representatives of the Cossacks, one of the factions in the present political conflict in Russia? . . . Perhaps he wants to act in harmony with that section of the English Press which in the very moment of

prepared the ground for the later blunders of the Allied diplomacy and made them stand out in still more glaring relief. Those were indeed fateful steps, both for Russia and for the Allies, which began when the Allies had to define their attitude to the Russian peace programme. To-day, when the veil is partly lifted and secrets are being revealed, when it is known that Austria made serious proposals for peace, the conduct of the Allied diplomacy is still harder to understand. When one hears of the demands then made by French diplomacy, one comes to the conviction that the imperialistic mania from which Miliukov's party suffered was an international phenomenon. It is hard to restrain one's feelings when one thinks that Russia was sacrificed to satisfy the annexationist greed of the French imperialists, who were not content with Alsace-Lorraine, but who wanted to annex purely German land. To-day the same statesmen who allowed Russia to go to rack and ruin for the sake of their greed for a "bigger Alsace," hypocritically say that they will not lay down their arms till justice is done in Russia. But I want to forget these newly revealed facts in writing this chapter. I shall attempt to describe the struggle of the Allied diplomacy with the Russian democracy as it appeared in Russia, where these facts were not yet known.

When the Soviet had published its manifesto to the peoples of the world, there began a time of great expectations. How would Europe respond? At first the Russians thought only of what would be the attitude of Germany. Less attention was paid to France and England. That is not to say that the Russian democracy was

Kornilov's adventure took Kornilov's side? Or has he taken into consideration the reception of General Gurko by King George, after his escape to England with the assistance of 'certain Englishmen' and on a 'foreign ship.' Such demonstrations of sympathy with the representatives of the old *régime* and the 'Kornilovists' are least of all likely to help in strengthening 'friendly relations' between England and Russia. They only serve to call forth a justifiable mistrust of the rulers of England in the Russian democracy."

forgetful or ignorant of the fact that a powerful and militant imperialism with annexationist desires existed in these countries. No. But, none the less, they hoped and expected that the influence of the Russian Revolution would appear most quickly and most powerfully just in these free and democratic states. They were confident that the old democratic traditions of these countries would make them all the more responsive to any manifestations of the democratic spirit in Russia. From England and France they expected an immediate and joyful response.

The aim of the Russian democracy in making this appeal was to put an end to the war with one blow. It was a great dream, worthy of a great revolution. But it was an ideal, and even the greatest enthusiasts did not believe that peace would come all at once. The democracy knew that they were in for a stubborn and intense struggle for peace. And their programme in that struggle was definite and realistic. In the first place, to prove to the Russian Army and to the broad masses of the democracy that Russia and her Allies had no aims of conquest, that they were fighting a purely defensive war, and that if the war had to continue it was wholly and solely the fault of Austro-German imperialism. In the second place, to destroy the internal unity of Germany, which was built and nourished on the conviction that the Allies were threatening the integrity of the Central Powers, that they had annexationist aims and were out for purely German territory, that they wanted to dismember Austria and destroy the Turkish Empire and to exclude Germany from the world's commerce and colonial power.

The Russian and Allied imperialists tried to discredit this first international act of the Russian Revolution by calling it doctrinaire and fanatical. It was, in fact, neither fanatical nor doctrinaire. It was an instinctively felt and deeply considered action which did honour to the statesmanship of the Russian democracy.

Whatever its influence may have been in Germany, it was the one means of reviving the Russian army. If the Russian and Allied Governments had succeeded in convincing the Russian army—not by mere statements but by evident facts—that Russia, in concert with her Allies, had renounced every kind of annexation, that they were making every effort to bring the war to an honourable conclusion as soon as possible, and that only Germany was prolonging the war in the interests of her policy of conquest, then millions of Russian soldiers (the Russian army at that time numbered at least eight millions) would have risen like a man in defence of Russia and the Allies. All Russia would have fought the more vigorously, since every soldier who longed for peace would have known that the only way to peace was through war. The Russian democracy certainly never suspected that difficulties would arise from the Allied side. On the contrary, they were convinced that the Allied democracies would go with them enthusiastically. They knew that there would be a struggle in the Allied countries, and that the imperialists would not easily give way; but they had no doubt of the final triumph of the democratic principles.

“We are prepared to back up the peoples of England, France and Italy by force of arms if they compel their Governments to renounce conquests and are none the less compelled to defend themselves against Germany. But we shall firmly protest against the continuation of the war for the interests of capital, whatever the national flag under which it sails.” Such was the simple and straightforward message of the Russian democracy to the Allies. And the answer was at least as simple, but cruel and abrupt. The Allies refused to democratise the Allied war-aims, rejected all proposals to revise the treaties, and, instead, simply demanded that Russia should go on fighting. Having refused to help the Russian democracy in its efforts to re-inspire the army, the Allies nevertheless demanded that the

Russian army should undertake an offensive as it was. And when this senseless offensive, carried out owing to the insistence of the Allies against all strategical considerations, led to an appalling catastrophe, as it was bound to do, and brought about the final ruin of the Russian army, the Allies washed their hands of Russia.

On March 14 the Soviet issued its Manifesto, and on the 27th the Provisional Government associated itself with the principle of no annexations and no indemnities. At once in the Allied countries the cry was raised that the Russian democracy was contemplating a separate peace. The situation became very curious. The Russian democracy approached the Allies with the most urgent request to help them in the struggle for a general peace; and, if a general peace appeared impossible, to give them the possibility of reorganising the army. Instead of answering their request and lending assistance, the Allies began to accuse them of wanting to make a separate peace with the enemy. Their accusation was as illogical as it was dishonest. It was a kind of "political strategy" to obscure the issue and to avoid making a definite reply. But at first the Russian democracy took it in good faith and considered it as an honest misunderstanding. As soon as they were aware of it, they began to make all possible efforts to convince the Western democracies that they were mistaken in their interpretation of Russia's intentions. They did this so decisively and so completely that the greatest sceptics must have been forced to realise that the accusation of the Allies was without foundation. The democracy, the Government, the democratic Press, every meeting of soldiers or workers, congresses of Soviets and Soldiers' Delegates: all of them emphatically stated that there was not the least idea of making a separate peace. The Russian democracy denounced fraternisation as soon as the suspicion arose that it could be interpreted as a separate peace. They indignantly refused to listen to the numerous offers of separate peace. But nothing helped. The legend of "separate



peace " continued to be spread, and the more the Allies shouted about separate peace and about the alleged treachery of the Russian democracy to the Allied cause, the easier it was for them to avoid answering the direct questions and requests of the Russian democracy and the Provisional Government.

In the disastrous misunderstandings and misrepresentations which arose from this situation, a prominent part was played by the Allied missions to the young democracy. French, Belgian, British, and Italian Socialists and workers hastened to Russia to implore the democracy and the Soviets not to conclude a separate peace. It was a most unedifying procession, but there was a certain humorous element in it. Not only was their specific mission without any relation to the real situation in Russia, since the Russian democracy had no thought of making a separate peace; they were altogether out of touch with the feelings of Russia; in many cases people had to force themselves to take them seriously. They made the impression that their mission was simply to assure the Russian democracy that the French and British workers and Socialists were as good and faithful imperialists as their Governments. Fortunately the Russian democracy took their statements very sceptically, and in spite of their repeated assertions that they were the true representatives of Western Labour and Socialism, they were not believed.

These missions merely had a negative effect. They showed democratic Russia the weakness of the democracy in the Allied countries. The very fact that the Governments of these countries could choose the emissaries of Labour, and that in spite of the demands, not only of the Soviet, but even of the Provisional Government, the minority Socialists were unable to come, showed the Russian democracy how little help they could expect from the Allied democracies in their struggle for peace.

In speaking about the Allied missions, it is only just to record the sincere efforts made by Mr. Arthur

Henderson to make the real Russian attitude known in this country on his return. Unfortunately his efforts were made fruitless by the same methods of "political strategy."

But the missions were, after all, only an incident, and people soon forgot them after their departure. Much more weight was carried by the official conduct of the Allied diplomacy. First there were the speeches of the leading statesmen on the question of foreign policy; secondly, the question of calling an inter-Allied conference for the revision of war-aims. Later on a third element was added in the struggle against the Stockholm conference.

It is not necessary to dwell on the speeches at great length. It is sufficient to say that every speech on foreign policy in the French and British Parliaments was received with an outburst of enthusiasm in Russian imperialistic circles and was the cause of great distress to the Russian democracy. Every speech showed how infinitely far away the ideals of the Russian democracy were from the real programme of the Allied diplomacy. Every speech lessened the hopes of an early peace, every speech shook the faith of the Russian democracy in the possibility of joint Allied action towards peace, and correspondingly assisted the disintegration of the Russian army. Miliukov's party was jubilant, and with good reason, for the Allied diplomacy, while diverging more and more widely from the ideas of the Russian democracy, became more and more closely in agreement with the views of the Russian imperialists. For example, Miliukov's organ, the *Rech* (on the 6/19th of May) welcomed Lord Robert Cecil's speech in the following terms: "In the House of Commons Lord Robert Cecil answered Snowden's proposal to welcome Russia's declaration on the renouncement of imperialistic conquests and territorial gains. While the German Chancellor's reply, to which we referred the other day, did away with the illusion of German readiness for peace. Lord Robert Cecil's reply will undoubtedly help to

destroy another illusion—which imagines that the countries in alliance with us can easily be brought into line with the ideas of Zimmerwald and Kintal (this was the Russian imperialists' favourite way of referring to the peace formula of the Soviet). Lord Cecil subjected the notorious formula 'without annexations or indemnities' to severe criticism, basing his contentions on the essential interests of Great Britain and her Allies."

The same speech produced such a deplorable impression in Russian Socialist and democratic circles that the leading democratic organs refrained from commenting on it at length. But their mood may be judged from the following comments in the *Izvestia* (7/20th May) on the above article in the *Rech*: "Miliukov's organ, the *Rech*, is triumphant with unconcealed and malicious delight—and what for? Because the English Foreign Minister adopted a none too benevolent attitude to the peace 'without annexations or indemnities,' to which revolutionary democratic Russia and with them the Provisional Government have pledged themselves. The late Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs is delighted that Russia's policy meets with opposition in England!"

But however harmful these speeches were, the main evil did not come from them, but from the absolutely intolerable attitude of the Allies to Russia's request for a conference to revise the Allied war-aims. Had the Allies deliberately decided to drive Russia to desperation, had they consciously intended to destroy in the Russian army and the Russian people all confidence in the Allies, they could not have done so more successfully.

In effect, the Russian democracy, having definitely repudiated all aims of conquest in their foreign policy, very soon realised the need of revising the existing treaties and agreements between Russia and her Allies. The sinister significance of the Secret Treaties began to be known. There were two currents of opinion in the democracy. The radical minority was for an immediate

publication of the Secret Treaties, and wanted Russia to declare them null and void. The majority, though of the same opinion that the imperialistic agreements of the old régime could not be binding on democratic Russia, considered that the Russian Government ought not to publish them without the sanction of the Allies. They therefore proposed to convoke an immediate conference of the Allied Governments, at which the Allies should replace the Secret Treaties by an open declaration of Allied war-aims in accordance with the principle of "no annexations and no indemnities."

The Russian democracy again showed wise statesmanship on this occasion. Unfortunately the Allies did not meet them with straightforward statesmanship.

At first they expressed readiness to meet the Russians. For instance, Ribot, in his speech in the French Chamber, and the British Government, in its Note to the Russian Government early in May, announced their willingness to discuss the revision of the treaties in conference. After that Russia asked and implored the Allies to make arrangements for such a conference, but it did not take place. All Russia's hopes were set on the conference. It was many times announced and many times cancelled, postponed, and again announced. But it remained a "phantom conference." No doubt this obstinacy and prevarication was exercised for lofty national interests. But the question remains: would it not have been better honestly to fulfil the promise, to call the conference and revise the treaties, instead of driving Russia to desperation and compelling her to publish the agreements independently and to repudiate them as the ignominious legacy of Tsardom?

The longer the Allies put off the revision of their war-aims, the more the strength and military fitness of Russia became undermined through lack of certainty and confidence in the purposes of the war. And the more Russia's military power decreased, the less interest the Allies had in meeting her requests. Thus the behaviour of the Allies became more and more high-handed. The

Allied Press, which had never been very friendly since the Revolution, began to adopt an arrogant and contemptuous tone. During the Miliukov crisis, Chernov reproached the Provisional Government with speaking to the Allies in the tone of a poor relation. This reproach could be applied with equal justice to the Coalition Government of which Chernov himself was a member. But the real cause of this lack of self-respect was the attitude of the Allies, who began by degrees to treat Russia really as a "poor relation." The Allies began to remonstrate with Russia. The Allied Ambassadors made a *démarche* and reproached the Government for the lack of discipline in the Russian army. The Allies put forward demands : Russia should "fulfil her duty as an ally." At last the question of the revision of the treaties was made to depend on the military activities of Russia. The Allies brought pressure to bear on the Russian Government, and demanded that the Russian army should begin an immediate offensive.

To-day it is a matter of common knowledge that the July offensive of the Russian army was the gravest and most fatal blunder of Kerenski and the Russian high command. It was more than a blunder. It was the heaviest crime any statesman could have committed. It was equivalent to staking the whole fate of the Revolution and the very existence of Russia as an independent State on one very doubtful move.

History will never forgive Kerenski and his associates for this crime. But its judgment of him will be mitigated by the fact that he was acting under an appalling pressure from the Allies.



## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE COALITION GOVERNMENT

THE conflict on Miliukov's note, which led to such a sharp crisis, at the same time revealed the true spirit of the Revolution. In the first place, it showed that in two months the political education of the masses had made gigantic strides. Petrograd, which reacted so strongly to the convulsions of imperialism, was in no way isolated from the rest of Russia in its fight against imperialism. Throughout Russia the ill-intentioned note of the Foreign Office gave rise to the most lively dissatisfaction. On all sides it was understood as an attempt of the provisional Government to return to the policy of conquest and annexation which had been repudiated and condemned by the nation. But the conflict had a deeper significance. It revealed an approaching split between the revolutionary democracy and the liberal and bourgeois elements.

The workers, the peasants, and the army throughout Russia loudly and decisively expressed their adherence to the Soviet. The propertied classes no less definitely revealed their readiness to support the Provisional Government. And it is a most remarkable thing that the split took place, not on any question of internal politics, but on the question of the war. The war became the centre, the key to future developments. Russia was in the grip of the most awful financial crisis and economic exhaustion. The difficulties of transport led to an absolute breakdown, and famine was threatening. There could be no successful struggle with these evils while the war lasted. On the contrary, with every day that the war continued the financial and economic exhaustion increased, and the country came nearer and nearer to the abyss. The will to peace alone had the power to save the country and its hard-won freedom.

It was necessary to stop the war, which was threatening to destroy the gains of the Revolution as it had destroyed the Tsardom. "If the war was not to kill the Revolution, the Revolution must kill the war:" such was the cry of all democratic Russia. The propertied classes, who had been trusted to accomplish this chief and greatest task of the Revolution, were reluctant and unable to fulfil it. The democracy could not trust them any longer. Miliukov's attempt to revive the imperialistic aims of the old régime had for the time being destroyed the power of the bourgeoisie in Russia. A new power had to be created, one which would be able to fulfil the aims of the Revolution. But of what elements was this new power to consist? The left wing of the revolutionary democracy decided without hesitation that it should consist purely of the Soviet elements: "All power to the Soviets!" But the overwhelming majority of the Soviet (the Bolsheviks at that time were in a minority of less than one in ten) definitely rejected the idea of a Soviet Government and decided for a coalition. To-day, after the event, there can be little doubt that the decision of the Soviet was by no means the best. A Soviet Government at that time would have been a blessing for Russia, and probably for the world as well. The decision to form a purely democratic and Socialist Government could not at that time have led to civil war, as it did six months later, when the Bolsheviks took the power of the State into their hands. In the first place, a Soviet Government at that time would have aimed, not at the realisation of a Socialist State, but at the fulfilment of the general aims of the Revolution. Secondly, the Soviet at that time united not only the workers, peasants, and soldiers, but also large circles of radical and intellectual liberalism. The popularity of the Soviet was so great and so extensive that no one class would have dared to stand out in open opposition to a Soviet Government. Undoubtedly a Soviet Government would have known how to adopt a suitable tone in its negotiations with the Allies, and the question of the

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revision of treaties and war-aims would at last have been established on a practical footing. But the Soviet was an advocate of adjustment and conciliation. It decided to create a Coalition Government. Moderation unfortunately is not always a virtue. In this case the Soviet was making a grave political mistake, for the Coalition Government bungled the question of peace and the negotiations with the Allies still more than the first, purely bourgeois, Government had done.\* Probably it was not so much the principle of coalition which was at fault as the structure and organisation of the actual coalition which was formed. In fact the crisis had taken place on the question of foreign policy. The Socialists decided to participate in the Government in order to see that democratic principles were carried out in the foreign policy of the country. They might naturally have been expected to take over the Foreign Office. But in reality foreign affairs were left in the hands of the same party whose policy had, only just before, brought the country to the verge of disaster. I have already said that the democracy were ready to compromise with the bourgeoisie on every question of internal policy if only the Government would energetically pursue a more democratic line in its foreign policy. But they were fooled. The propertied classes preferred to see a Social Revolutionist as Minister of Agriculture, a Social Democrat as Minister of Labour, a Socialist Food Controller, and even a Socialist War Minister, if only they could keep the foreign affairs in their own hands, which

\* Baron Rosen, former Russian Ambassador at Tokyo and Washington, refers to the mistakes of the Coalition Government in the following terms, in a letter to the *Novaia Zhizn*, October 10th: "This equivocal attitude of the Russian Government has done the interests of the country irreparable harm, because the voice of Russian diplomacy grows weaker with every month of war, and disorganisation goes on increasing. This duplicity of Russian policy on the question of peace and war reveals to the whole world the division of the nation into two camps, the more important of which ardently desires peace, while the other, which comprises an influential minority, obstinately clings to war to the bitter end."

they did. As soon as the new Government was formed the public began to discuss what its policy would be. There was a repetition of the same discussion as had taken place two months before, as to whether the party of peace or the party of war had been victorious. Considering the definite programme on which the new Government was based, this discussion should have been unnecessary. On the basis of its adopted programme it was definitely a Government for the liquidation of the war. Its programme was harmonious, a consistent programme of peace, based on the one hand on the struggle for peace, and on the other hand on the strengthening of the fighting power of the Russian army. And yet its formation was greeted with great joy by the imperialists of Russia and of all other countries. They rubbed their hands and said: "The Russian Socialists have set to work to strengthen the Russian army. It follows that they are pro-war. It is a red-letter day for us." It was so indeed; but, as far as the democracy was concerned, the strengthening of the army did not mean war for them. Referring to this joy "on the imperialist street," the *Izvestia* of May 13th, about a week after the Coalition Government was formed, said: "Peace is the aim of the revolutionary democracy, nor does it intend to make for peace by way of war. Not by military victories does it seek the way out from the blind alley of bloodshed. . . . Our comrades have entered the Coalition Government for the business of peace. They will make it their concern to see that the Governments of all countries are compelled openly to say their thoughts on the actual aims of the war, without any prevarications, before their own peoples and the whole world. The delegates of the Soviet will work out the great task of reviving the international brotherhood of workers, in their post in the Government, even as they have done in the Soviet itself." These were proud and sincere words, but it all turned out to be an illusion.

The new Government had two pivots: the task of

reviving the spirit and increasing the fighting strength of the army, which was entrusted to Kerenski, and the task of preparing the way to peace and negotiating with the Allies, which was given to Tereshchenko. The army was to be strengthened, not to continue the war, but to have, if necessary, a strong military argument against Germany. For equilibrium and a harmonious elaboration of the country's policy, it was necessary for these two elements to supplement each other. Kerenski set himself to his task with his accustomed energy and with a real revolutionary inspiration. He really enlarged the revolutionary outlook of the soldiers; it was a very promising beginning. But the more Kerenski inspired the army with new vigour and force, the more his success served to whet the imperialistic appetites of the bourgeoisie. The Cadets and their supporters on the Right began to speak, not only about the sacred interests of Russia, about war till victory, and so forth, but even about their hopes of arresting the Revolution. The High Command drew its own conclusions from the efforts to revive the army and from Kerenski's success. The Commander-in-Chief, Alexeiev, made speeches to the soldiers scorning the idea of the democratic peace programme and proclaiming that Russia needed "victory, not peace." The attitude of the High Command began to make the democracy very uneasy, and Kerenski had to dismiss Alexeiev. But that did not stem the tide of imperialism in the High Command, and Kerenski attempted to mitigate matters still further. General Gurko was dismissed from his command and degraded. But these were only half measures, and the counter-revolutionary aspirations of the High Command continued to grow.

Meanwhile Tereshchenko, who was under the direct obligation to hasten the negotiations with the Allies and to bring them to a satisfactory conclusion, began instead to make every possible effort to "reassure" the Allies that Russia would "fulfil her duties" towards them. The democracy disapproved of the line which



Tereshchenko was taking, but their protests were ineffective. They felt quite clearly that the issue was being befogged. They saw that the Government was beginning to put more weight on the strengthening of the army than on the other equally important component part of their policy.

The Government was evidently beginning to put another interpretation on the "strengthening of the army." The conception of the democracy was that the army must be ready for an offensive in case Germany should reject the revised peace platform of the Allies. The offensive was to be the "last argument." But the Government was drifting to the idea of an immediate offensive before the war-aims of the Allies had been cleared up. The democracy was conscious of the danger, for the army would interpret such an offensive as an imperialist and capitalist war, and the struggle for peace would be endangered by Russia's military collapse: such a course was bound to lead to disaster. But this time the democracy could not assert itself. The internal situation was becoming more and more complicated, and absorbing all attention. The Right was raising its head and counter-revolution was being openly prepared. A very serious process was developing in the ranks of the democracy itself. In the factories and in the garrison the watchword "All power to the Soviets" began to assume the character of an opposition not only to the bourgeoisie but to the more moderate elements of the Soviet itself.

The bourgeois classes began to scream, "Anarchy!" In the economic sense the situation was indeed very dangerous. Russia was balancing on the edge. Industry was hopelessly dislocated through lack of fuel and transport difficulties. Many factories closed down; lock-outs were made under the pretext of the excessive demands of the workers; the railways and trams were giving out, and even the water supply was getting scarce through lack of fuel. But to these realities a variety of fantastic fictions and exaggerations were added. Every little

incident was magnified and made a subject of excitement. Many sheer inventions were circulated and wildly discussed in the Press—for instance, the “republic of Schüsselburg,” which never existed. It is true that such inventions and exaggerations lived, in each case, only for a day or two, or sometimes only for a few hours, but they did their work in stirring up agitation and fear among the citizens. Needless to say that every lie and every baseless accusation, every absurd exaggeration, was diligently circulated abroad. But subsequent corrections and denials were seldom even mentioned afterwards in the foreign Press.

The meaning of all this super-induced agitation and excitement was on the one hand to arouse the Government to fight the more consistent and decisive elements in the democracy, and on the other hand to frighten the people and split the democracy. The propertied classes themselves had not the power to “fight anarchy,” and had they tried to do so would only have revealed their counter-revolutionary intentions and welded the democracy together against them. Instead, they paid every compliment to the moderate elements of the democracy, and tried to inspire them firmly to resist the demands of the Left. Unfortunately the course of events favoured the tendency to split. The extreme elements in the Soviet, whose popularity was growing, ventured to emphasise their differences with the moderates in face of the counter-revolutionary danger. On the other hand, the moderate elements began to be influenced more and more by the Machiavellian whispers of the bourgeoisie, and there began an open feud within the democratic camp, to the unconcealed delight of all imperialists in Russia and in the Allied countries. The imperialist papers in the Allied countries cautiously suggested the dawn of a “renaissance” in Russia.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### THE OFFENSIVE AND DISASTER

THE first month of the Coalition Government was a time of preparation and rapid development in Russia. The diverse forces which were to play so great a part at a later stage were ripening. On the one hand grew the forces of counter-revolution, on the other hand Bolshevism. At that time the separatist movement among the border peoples was beginning to threaten to disintegrate Russia. To the economic exhaustion of the country this new element of danger was added; no State could have been in a more critical position. Every effort was made to resist the tendency of disintegration. But nothing could properly arrest it short of the realisation of peace and the true reconstruction of the country. And yet Russia was drifting towards a continuation of the war.

On the front there was absolute quiet. Fraternisation had died out, but there was a kind of informal suspension of hostilities. The Germans, after their local attack on the Stokhod immediately after the Revolution, absolutely ceased all warlike operations. Probably they had several motives for their abstention. Undoubtedly they did not want to disturb the gradual disintegration of the Russian army by any aggressive movement which might inspire new warlike ardour in the people and in the soldiers. Nor had they lost all hope that the Russian democracy might help to bring about a general peace; and they may even have cherished a hope that in the long run the democracy would make a separate peace. But their main motive was a fear of the internal dissatisfaction in Germany. An offensive undertaken against

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revolutionary Russia would have caused considerable agitation among the German workers, who would have interpreted it as an attempt to destroy the Revolution. But the longer the indefinite situation at the front continued, the more impatient grew the warlike party in Germany. They would have welcomed nothing more gladly than any kind of provocation from Russia's side. They could then crush Russia without any fear of opposition from the democratic elements in Germany.

While the Russian democracy was engaged in internal strife and disagreement, the Coalition Government began to organise its mad offensive. Towards the end of May all the bourgeois Press was discussing the offensive as a foregone conclusion. In fact, the offensive was on the lips of everyone. At that time the Soviet leaders demanded an explanation from Kerenski about the war situation and the rumours of an offensive. Kerenski made an important speech in which he explained that the work of diplomacy was very difficult; that Russia was beginning to carry less weight with her Allies, and that in diplomatic negotiations she must have this strongest argument of a tried and proven military efficiency and warlike power.\* In the second place, he said, the question of offensive or no offensive was in the hands of the High Command. "It is a matter of strategy, of the technique of war, and of the special circumstances on the front." In vain the Left warned him that the offensive was above all a political question on which the whole position of the democracy, and, in fact, of Russia, before the world, depended. Least of all should it have been entrusted to the High Command, which was permeated with imperialistic

\* Kerenski's Under-Secretary, Colonel Yakubovich, stated at the conference of the delegates from the front that France and England had approached the Provisional Government with a declaration beseeching them to undertake the offensive. If not, they declared that the inactivity on the Russian front would force them, in the final reckoning, to follow the path of separate peace with Germany. This declaration by Yakubovich was published in all the Russian papers and in the official Gazette.

sympathies, and altogether out of touch with the ideals and the expressed policy of the democracy. In vain the Left warned the Government that an offensive should not be made into a political weapon for diplomatic purposes. The offensive was decided on by the Government to impress the Allies.

The Russian military position at that time gave not the slightest justification even for an offensive on a limited scale. It is true that the suspension of hostilities for many months had helped Russia to accumulate a fairly large amount of munitions. But as far as food supply and clothing were concerned, the army was absolutely inadequately provisioned. And the really dangerous thing was the morale of the armies. Had Germany begun an offensive it would probably have inspired the Russian army with vigour and patriotism. But an offensive at a time when the old treaties with the Allies for imperialistic aims had not even been revised, an offensive carried out with an army which was vigorously protesting against this evil, was sheer madness.

But there were great temptations for the Russian generals. In the first place, there was the notion that the Austro-German armies on the Russian front were likewise infected and demoralised by the Revolution and subsequent fraternisation. Secondly, reconnaissances had shown that parts of the Austrian front were very thinly held, and that an easy success could be obtained by a well-organised surprise movement. There was an idea that a success on one part of the front might inspire the whole Russian army and people with a new patriotism and warlike fervour. And even a defeat was thought to have its saving features. It would again inspire the army and the people to repel the invaders.\*

On the long fighting line from the Baltic to the Black Sea a small part was chosen which promised a more or

\* After the July offensive, the Allied Press actually used to call every reverse on the front, even the fall of Riga, a "blessing in disguise."



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less successful beginning.\* The representatives of the soldiers had made it quite plain that the army was not ready to make a blow, and that even if they could be forced or persuaded to attempt one, they were absolutely unable to sustain a reverse without disaster. But the generals knew their way. They began an energetic campaign of "careful nursing" on the front, and carried away the Government by promises of a splendid beginning. This "nursing" consisted in collecting on a narrow section of the front, which was very thinly held by the enemy, specially chosen divisions; but even the soldiers of these divisions were little inclined for an offensive, and the High Command collected at the same point the British armoured cars, Checho-Slovak contingents, a good many British and French aviators, and all the shock battalions, the Kornilovists, "battalions of death," and the other troops which soon after the disaster played the chief part in the counter-revolutionary movements. But that was not all. Whole regiments were made up of officers only. This heterogenous

\* "The *Times* History of the War," Part 170, "The Russian Offensive and Retreat," says (p. 12): "*Faithful to the call of their obligations as Allies*, seeking manfully to justify the Revolution, unheeding the clamour of Bolshevik agitation and German agents whom they were powerless to bridle or subdue, the Provisional Government gladly adopted M. Kerenski's views as to the possibility of a general offensive. A conference at headquarters between Ministers and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, General Brusilov, who had been transferred from the South-Western front to succeed General Alexeiev, did not yield so much promise. It was ascertained that a simultaneous offensive on all the fronts would necessitate indefinite delay. The Northern front had suffered such ravages from the proximity of Petrograd and its demoralising influences that scarcely any hope could be entertained of its reviving before the season had matured too much for effective operations. The Western or Central front, recently commanded by General Gurko, was better off, as the Bolshevik strongholds, Petrograd and Kronstadt, were farther away. But it was badly infected, and nothing could be done much before the end of July. The South-Western front looked more promising. *With careful nursing* it might be counted upon to deliver a blow some time in June." (The italics are mine.)

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force, altogether in opposition to the main mass of the army and to the most important public opinion in Russia, consisting partly of foreigners and partly of counter-revolutionists, was thrown in to take the most fateful step, which was a gamble on the whole destinies of Russia and the Revolution. The criminal frivolity of this gamble can be judged from the story told in the " 'Times' History of the War " (Part 170, p. 21) :

" Much heart-burning had been endured by the Russian commanders before the advance. Individual units were constantly developing sporadic weakness. Several mutinies broke out. . . . One of the corps commanders prayed silently during the fateful minutes preceding the appointed time. Would his men go over the top? He hoped so, but could not feel sure. When, punctually at 9 a.m., the troops swarmed over and the attacking waves rolled onward, this general devoutly crossed himself."

In spite of all the risks and disadvantages which this condition of the army involved, and notwithstanding the blunders of the generals (one of the generals had to be dismissed during the advance itself), the attack under the very favourable strategical circumstances easily led to an initial success. The Russian army advanced, took many prisoners, and occupied a number of positions. The Government celebrated a great victory. The troops which participated in this offensive received red banners and were called " troops of the first of July." The imperialist elements in Petrograd made a great patriotic demonstration. Generals dismissed by the Revolution, Cadet leaders, and members of foreign missions went in procession, making great jubulations. The *Morning Post* of July 5th, under the title " The Renaissance of Russia," describes these rejoicings as follows : " Processions with hastily improvised banners formed in various parts of the town, and their component parts were a very different class to those seen during the past three months in the streets of Petrograd. Banners bore devices such as ' War to a finish,' ' Hurrah for victory,'

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'Bravo the armies of the Revolution,' 'Down with politics,' and one which summed up all the rest in the words 'Unity and victory.' For many hours cheering crowds of the better class of people—with hardly any uniforms visible except, here and there, those of stray officers of the Allies, one of whom made a speech in Russian—remained before the Mariansky Palace listening to the speakers. Other crowds proceeded to visit the Allied Embassies. Before the British Embassy, where M. Miliukov spoke, an unpleasant incident was caused by an attempt at a hostile demonstration on the part of soldiers of the regiment whose barracks are near the Embassy across the Champ de Mars. . . . It was indeed a holiday in "the imperialistic street." For them the renaissance had begun.

The democracy were faced with the accomplished fact. There was deep anxiety for the immediate future. They knew that active hostilities would now inevitably break out on all fronts, and that the condition of the army would not enable it to bear the strain. They were very angry, for they realised that this small success in Galicia was bought at the price of the loss of all their great hopes for a general democratic peace. They knew that the German militarists would be only too glad to interpret this Russian offensive as a provocation and to have a pretext for carrying into effect the long-cherished desire to aim a blow at revolutionary Russia. But they had now no choice. They had to support the war policy, which they had rejected all the time as being unable to lead to a democratic peace. They sent greetings to the Galician front and appeals to the army inspiring them to fight with all their courage for the Revolution. The Bolsheviks alone remained aloof, and from this moment the hostility between them and the moderates became more implacable.

Meanwhile the Germans and Austrians, who had been taken by surprise, recovered and made a strong thrust, and in proportion as their attack increased in intensity the morale of the artificially conglomerated Russian

troops became worse. Indiscipline, and even mutiny, broke out more frequently. And such was the appalling disintegration that the army fled in panic, even before the Germans appeared in their full strength.

This disaster is commonly attributed to the Bolshevik propaganda at the front and the attempted rising in Petrograd against the Coalition Government. I am the last person to justify the Bolshevik rising in July, 1917. I condemn it because revolutionary methods were altogether out of place in Russia after the Revolution. The Bolsheviks later on conquered the power in the Petrograd Soviet by purely constitutional means, and were then strong by the support of the workers. In July, being in a minority in the Soviet, they tried to make themselves strong by machine-guns. That is why the July rising was so disgusting and failed to inspire any confidence or enthusiasm for the Bolshevik policy. But to attempt to put the responsibility for the disaster at the front on the Bolsheviks is absolutely unjustifiable. It is a deceitful move on the part of those who wish to conceal their own grave responsibility. Responsibility for the disaster is wholly borne by those who led the broken army into a frivolous adventure against the wishes, and contrary to the avowed policy, of the democracy. And even if the Bolsheviks had been responsible for the bad morale of the troops, the Government and the High Command knew that the troops were in such a dangerous mood and that the offensive was bound to lead to disaster. On the whole line only one small section was found at which an offensive was conceivably possible, and that only by "careful nursing" and by bringing in specially trained and foreign troops. It was a gamble on Russia's future, it was a gamble on all the great gains of the Revolution, and nobody should have dared to undertake it. If the Allies tried to compel the Coalition Government to do it, it should have refused. If the Allies threatened to make a separate peace at Russia's expense, it should have condemned their policy, and appealed to the peoples for a general peace, as the



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Russian democracy had been doing ever since the Revolution. Whatever the consequences, it was the Government's duty to refuse to undertake that frivolously adventurous offensive. The responsibility for the consequent disaster rests on the Government and on all those who impelled them to this senseless and suicidal policy.

The disaster in Galicia unbound the conflicting forces in Russia. The power of the moderate elements, who were responsible for the offensive, was fundamentally shaken. The counter-revolutionary forces came out into the open. For a short time there was a revived unity of the democracy in fighting against them, but soon the democracy underwent the final split which led to the Bolshevik revolution.

The struggle for a general peace was practically at an end. The democracy who had sustained such a blow, such a disappointment, at the hands of the Allied Governments, tried an appeal to the Allied Socialists and working classes. They hoped to get peace by a conference of the workers' international. But on this occasion the imperialists were once more stronger than the workers. The Stockholm Conference was vetoed by the French, Italian, and British Governments. The working classes of the Allied countries accepted unconditional victory as the only way to peace. This was a death-blow to the Soviet of the moderates. They lost all their influence and all their standing. After the Stockholm Conference was overthrown, the leaders of the first Soviet were eclipsed.

The Bolshevik Revolution of November tried new methods to bring about a general democratic conclusion of the war. A few months earlier their methods would probably have been crowned with success. As it was, deprived of an army, faced with the general hostility of Russia's propertied classes, pursued by the malevolence of the Allies, they had at length to submit to a disastrous separate peace.



NOWADAYS much energy is spent in condemning "secret diplomacy." More and more evidence is coming to light of the immense harm which secret diplomacy has done to mankind and to the world, and the full tale of these evils is certainly not yet told. But I venture to suggest that all the harm done by secret diplomacy is trifling in comparison to the evil effects of the absolutely public and unconcealed profession of journalism. I cannot help thinking that the whole history of the last four years would have been different if journalists had not betrayed their perfectly simple and honourable profession of reporting the plain truth. Secret diplomacy could certainly never have achieved its awful complications of mistrust without the deplorable assistance of the journalists. Imagine what the relations of this country to Russia would be to-day if the British correspondents in Russia had contented themselves with reporting the simple facts, instead of considering themselves as self-appointed ambassadors with a mission to make politics. To this day, thanks to the misleading articles of the majority of the British and French correspondents, the French and British publics have no conception of the actual spirit and ideas of the revolutionary democracy of Russia, nor of its attitude to the question of war and peace.



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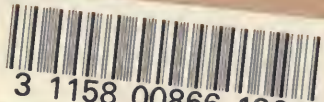
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